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ABSTRACT

This Workshop Leader's Guide is designed to assist Technical Assistance Center staff members and other inservice providers in conducting successful workshops on reading comprehension for teachers, administrators, and others associated with Chapter 1 programs. The guide contains step-by-step procedures for preparing, organizing, and presenting a one-hour workshop. The first section of the guide includes an introduction, a detailed checklist for materials and equipment needed to conduct the workshop, an advance planner, and the detailed instructions for presenting the workshop. The second and third sections of the guide contain the blackline masters for the participant handouts and overhead transparencies referred to in the workshop outline (including an ERIC Digest on "Dialogue Journal." (RS)

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Understanding Reading: What Do I Do On Monday? Reading Comprehension Workshop Leader's Guide.

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Getting Started

What's in this Guide?

This Workshop Leader's Guide is designed to assist Technical Assistance Center staff members and other inservice providers in conducting successful workshops on **reading comprehension** for teachers, administrators, and others associated with Chapter 1 programs. This guide contains step-by-step procedures for preparing, organizing, and presenting a one-hour (or one-and-a-half hour) workshop on reading.

Contents:

Section 1 includes the **Introduction** to the Guide, **Getting Started**, and the **Workshop Outline**.
The **Getting Started** section includes a detailed checklist for materials and equipment needed to conduct a successful workshop on reading comprehension and an Advance Planner.
The **Workshop Outline** includes detailed instructions for presenting a one-hour workshop including the goals of the workshop, specific activities, and recommendations for using the overhead transparencies and participant handouts. The outline for the one-hour workshop can be expanded to provide the basis for a workshop up to three or more hours in length.

Sections 2 and 3 contain the blackline masters for the participant handouts and overhead transparencies referred to in the **Workshop Outline**.

How to Use this Guide

This Guide contains the planning and presentation materials necessary to conduct a successful workshop on reading comprehension. The materials were developed to allow a great deal of flexibility. Suggestions for workshop variations and a number of activities are included so that the workshop can be adjusted to fit the needs and backgrounds of the participants. A wide range of approaches, types of activities, and specific research can be used in the actual workshop presentation. You may choose to change, add, or eliminate an activity or transparency. The sections in the Workshop Outline are well suited for expansion or contraction, depending upon your presentation needs. Special notes and user instructions appear in boxes throughout the Guide.

Study the contents of this guide by following the ***G-U-I-D-E*** steps outlined below: ***Glance***, ***Understand***, ***Investigate***, ***Develop***, and ***Edit***.

G-U-I-D-E

- *Glance* through the entire set of materials. This will give you a feel for the types of materials contained in the Guide (and their location) when you study the details later.
- *Understand* as many of the materials contained in the Guide as possible. Plan enough time to develop a full grasp of the materials in order to make more informed decisions about your workshop presentation.
- *Investigate* further. You may want to do additional research, try different problems, or experiment with various activities.
- *Develop* additional materials. These may be workshop notes, transparencies, handout pages, activities, or any item resulting from your "investigating" activities.
- *Edit*. Look carefully at the total picture, then elaborate or eliminate, if necessary.

Planning the Workshop

Begin your advance planning for the workshop by establishing some of the initial details, such items as date, place, and type of audience. (See Advance Planner, a simple checklist for planning a workshop, p.4.) Even if you use only the materials in this Guide, the *G-U-I-D-E* steps will take time and should be included in your planning. It is especially important to allow yourself the opportunity to thoroughly explore and review the activities in the Workshop Outline so the purpose and strategies for each activity will become more apparent to you. In addition, as you engage in the activities, you are likely to discover that you need or want to try additional activities from several sources. You may find that these materials are better suited to your particular workshop and, therefore, you may want to substitute them for other workshop materials in earlier sections of this guide.

What You Need for the Workshop:

EQUIPMENT

____ Overhead Transparency Projector
- ___ extension cord
- ___ 3-way plug adaptor
- ___ extra bulb or spare projector

____ Blank Overhead Transparencies

____ Screen

____ Microphone (if needed)

MATERIALS

____ Workshop Outline

____ Supporting Notes

____ Participant Handouts (one for each participant from Section 2)

____ Overhead Transparencies (prepared from masters in Section 3)

SUPPORT MATERIALS

____ Chart paper

____ Poster board

____ Marker and tape (or chalkboard and chalk)

Before You Begin

Make copies of the overhead transparencies you plan to use in the workshop, and be sure you have one copy of the handouts for each participant. If you are presenting the workshop in a location with which you are unfamiliar, ask the local contact person to be sure the equipment listed above is available and in working order on the scheduled day and time of the workshop. If you will be supplying your own equipment, make arrangements for obtaining it well in advance of the workshop and make sure everything is in working order.

Workshop Advance Planner

Presentation Information

Title _____

Date _____ Day _____ Time _____

Place _____

_____

Audience Type _____ Number _____

Purpose _____

Contact Person _____ Phone _____

Planning Task	Date Completed
Contact Person(s) for Planning	
Confirm Date, Time & Place	
Make Travel and Hotel Plans	
Arrange for Equipment	
Send Workshop Agenda to Contact	
Personalize Workshop Outline	
Other _____	

Understanding Reading Comprehension:
What do I do on Monday?

Workshop Overview

Introduction/Overview	**5-10 minutes**
Understanding the Process	**20-30 minutes**
What is reading?	
What factors affect reading?	
Implications for Instruction	**25-40 minutes**
What does the research say?	
So what should we do instructionally?	
Summary and Conclusion	**10-15 minutes**

Please note: While this workshop is part of the one-hour workshop series, there is enough material to extend it easily to one-and-a-half or even two hours.

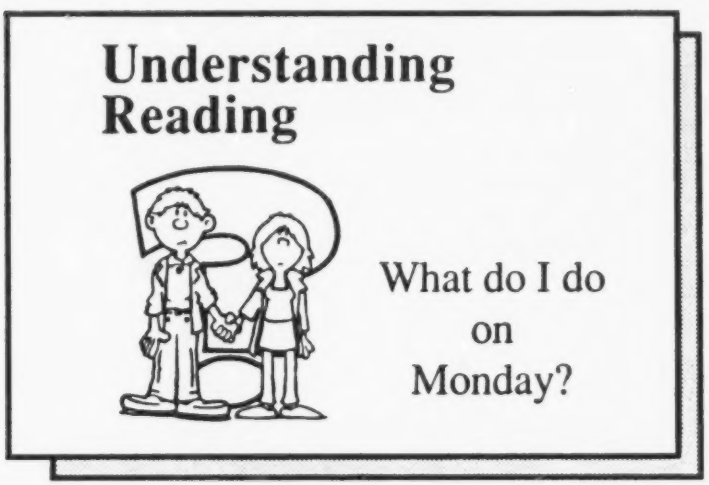
Workshop Outline

Time	Activity	Pages
5-10 minutes	**Introduction**	7 - 10
	Activities to Get Started	7 - 9
	Workshop Goals	10
	Handouts/Notes	10
20-30 minutes	**Understanding the Process**	11 - 17
	Activity Options	11
	Leading a Discussion	12
	Models of Reading	13
	Factors that Affect Reading	14
	Reading Strategies	15 - 17
	Characteristics of Independent Readers	17
25-40 minutes	**Implications for Instruction**	18 - 27
	What does the research say?	18 - 21
	Instructional Trends	22
	First...A Vision	23
	General Guidelines	24
	Then...Instructional Ideas	25 - 27
10-15 minutes	**Wrapping it Up**	28 - 30
	Establish a Climate	28
	Use a Thematic Approach	29
	Be a Strategic Teacher	29

Introduction/Overview

(5-10 minutes)

The Presenter's Guide begins here. Thumbnail sketches of all transparencies appear in the Guide at the points they should be displayed. All transparencies are numbered and titled. Within the text, a **"T"** and a number identify transparencies, i.e., **T-1** is the first transparency used in the workshop.



Display T-1: "Understanding Reading"

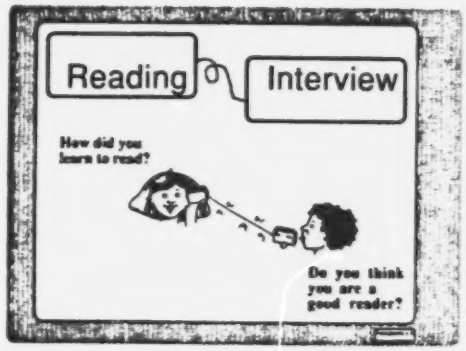
Starter Activities...

It's always a good idea to initiate a workshop by using an activity that gets participants involved immediately and starts them thinking about the content of the workshop. Since each workshop presenter has a different style and approach, several alternative activities are suggested below to use in introducing the concepts of the workshop.

Option 1:

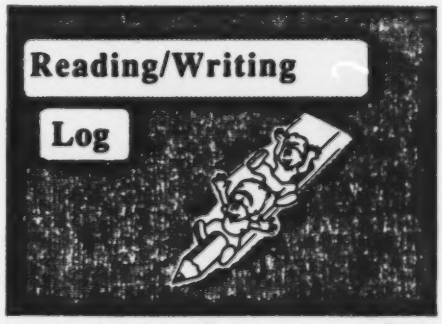
"Reading Interview" (T-a)

Explain that understanding the process of reading has a positive impact both on learning and teaching the process. Suggest that participants explore their own notions about reading by conducting the Reading Interview **(Handout, p.1)** with a partner. Each should take a turn asking the questions, and answers should be written. Then reverse the roles. Finally, reconvene the group and ask participants to discuss anything interesting that emerged from their interviews. (The Reading Interview form may also be completed individually.)



Option 2:

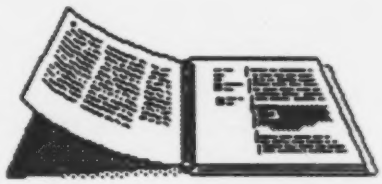
"Reading/Writing Log" (T-b)



Describe a reading/writing log in which the teacher and student interact about their reading and writing--habits, interests, attitudes, ability, etc. Ask them to pair up and, without speaking, take turns writing back and forth about the topic. Give them a phrase like "I think reading is...." or "When I write..." to start them off. When they have written for a while, take some time to discuss what they learned, what teachers and students could learn if they used this procedure. **(Handout, p. 1a)**

Option 3:

"ReQuest" (T-c)

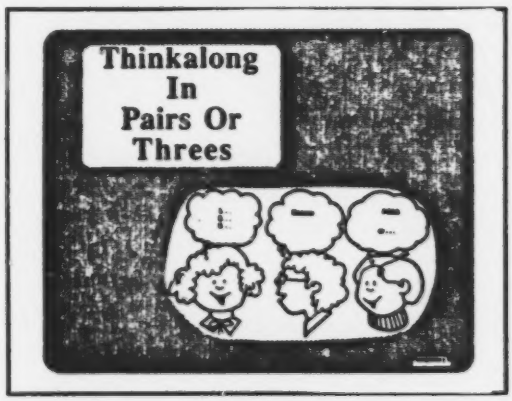


Refer participants to Handout, p. 41. Ask them to work in pairs on a procedure called "ReQuest". The idea is that they read a paragraph or agreed-upon section silently and then frame questions to ask each other. At each stopping point, each one should ask a question, then go on reading. Encourage them to frame as many questions as they can that go beyond literal recall-type questions. Briefly discuss their experience when they have had enough time to explore the procedure.

Option 4:

"Think-along in Pairs or Threes" (T-d)

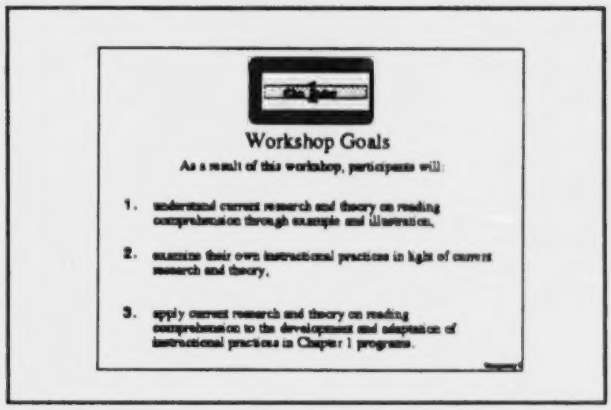
Explain that one of the most significant findings from research on the process of reading has to do with the importance of "making one's thinking public"--interacting and discussing what one is reading as well as the strategies being used. Refer participants to passage in **Handout, p. 2**, "The Three Spinsters". Ask them to read with a partner or in a small group. They should read silently, making notes in margins about thoughts that occur to them as they are reading. They should agree in their group before they start reading how long a segment to read each time before they discuss the segment. When the whole group seems to have completed the activity, display **T-2e** with list of reading strategies. As you review each strategy, ask participants to give an example from their discussion that reflects that strategy. (For example, you may indicate "activate prior knowledge" and ask them to give an example of how they brought their own background information to bear when they read the passage. (Do not belabor this discussion or review the strategies in a comprehensive way. This is a major part of the workshop later on.)



Workshop Goals

"Workshop Goals" (T-2)

Present the goals of the workshop. Display the transparency that contains the goals for the workshop. Discuss the goals of the workshop and how they are related to the Chapter 1 law and Chapter 1 program design. This workshop is designed to be a one or one-and-a half-hour workshop but can be easily extended by including more activities, discussion, or instructional suggestions.



One-hour Workshop

The one-hour workshop introduces participants to research and practical theory on reading comprehension. One hour is the minimum amount of time in which we feel you can present information on reading comprehension in a manner that allows participants to assimilate and integrate the findings of recent research and current theory into their instructional practices.

Participant Handouts

Distribute copies of the Participant Handouts. Explain to participants that the first half on the Handout includes materials that are used as part of the workshop presentation and may or may not be of use to them later. The second half contains specific examples or descriptions of instructional strategies or instructional reminders that are more likely to be of use to them. The Handout section is numbered sequentially to facilitate location of examples during the workshop.

Understanding the Process...

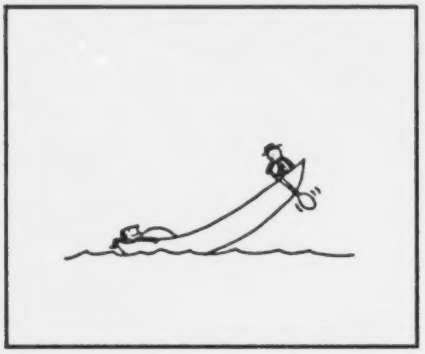
Activities

As with the introductory section above, you may choose to help participants develop an understanding of the reading process using procedures that feel comfortable to you and seem appropriate for your particular audience. A number of different activities are listed below. Choose one or more to suit participants (and your) needs, or use one of your own. Remember that the intent is to make participants think about a process they take very much for granted since it is something they do frequently and do well (generally speaking...exceptions may become obvious!).

Option 1:

"Read the Picture" (T-3)

Display **Transparency 3**, a figure/ground perception problem, and ask them to identify what it is. (Very few people see the image immediately. If you ask them what information would help them and supply that information, you will begin to see more and more people have an "Aha!" experience. (Just so you'll know-- It's the face of a black and white spotted Holstein cow!)



Option 2:

"Story in Pictures" (T-3a-3g)

Show series of partial pictures in sequence. Ask them to describe picture details as you show each one. Ask questions that relate to setting, characters, plot, events (to draw analogy to the reading of stories). Relate the "comprehension" of pictures--the way in which we perceive visual images--to that of reading symbols. Mention that one good definition of reading is "thought guided by symbols." Integrate discussion of strategies: using what you know, picking up clues, making predictions, using schemata to generate the "big picture".

Option 3: **"When Meaning is Elusive..."**

Use any one of sample passages included in the **Handout (pp. 9-10)** or another that you are familiar with to generate discussion of the process of reading. You might want to experiment by giving only some of the participants a topic or picture before reading and comparing the comprehension level of those who had and those who did not have a "thematic organizer". You could compare by asking for a retelling, developing literal recall questions, or having them complete a cloze passage after reading. (Almost all of these passages were taken from some piece of research on the process of reading. It is sometimes interesting to share that fact and conduct your own experiment!)

Leading a Discussion...

As you use an activity, ask questions and discuss how they went about "solving the problem" that was presented. Depending on the activity you choose to use, use some of the following questions to guide the discussion.

1. What information could I give you that would help you interpret the information presented? (In certain instances, as with the figure/ground problem picture of the cow, you might ask participants to guess what it is, ask what information would help them, give them that information, and then ask them to guess again.)

2. As you started looking at/reading the information, what was the question in your mind?(Most will respond with "What is this about?" or "What is this?". Discuss the fact that beginning readers or students who have had difficulty learning to read do not usually ask themselves that question. Point out that asking oneself such questions is part of "self-monitoring" or "metacognitive awareness" of the process.)

3. If you made a prediction, at what point did you make it? Describe how you proceeded after you made the prediction. (Some will indicate that they went on to pick up additional information, and others will tell you that they went back to see if the information they already processed fits with their prediction.) This is a good point to talk about the flexible and individual nature of reading.

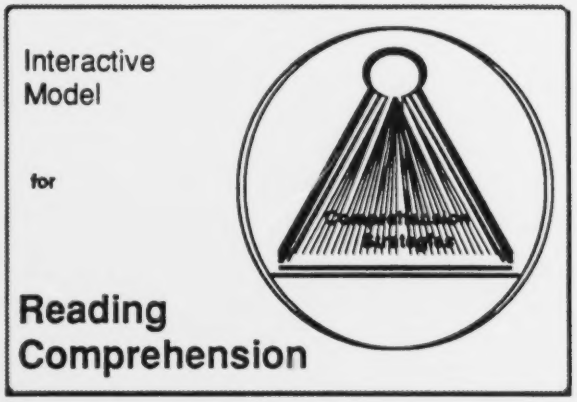
4. What makes reading easy or difficult? Even if participants viewed pictures only, ask them to suggest what it was that made the pictures easy or difficult to comprehend. If they read more than one passage, ask them to compare difficulty levels. You might ask the participants to indicate how many felt one especially interesting if the passages are very different types because you will usually get a split response. It's a good opportunity again to mention some of the strategies and qualities of the reading process that are identified in the summary section of this part of the workshop. For example, you can talk about the importance of background knowledge and the flexible and individual nature of the process.

5. What is the product of reading? (Again you will want to talk about the flexible nature of the process as it is based on intents and purposes, and it is important to discuss the fact that what you take away or recall is not merely a collection of facts and details (in fact, that is what is forgotten most readily), but a general semantic description of the content that is made up of a combination of the concepts presented, one's own background knowledge, and the inferences made as the two interacted. This can be referred to as "getting the big picture" and is similar to, though not exactly the same as, the traditional classroom concept of "getting the main idea." The reason that they are not exactly the same is that there really can't be one main idea to which everyone subscribes...again, the individual nature of the process.

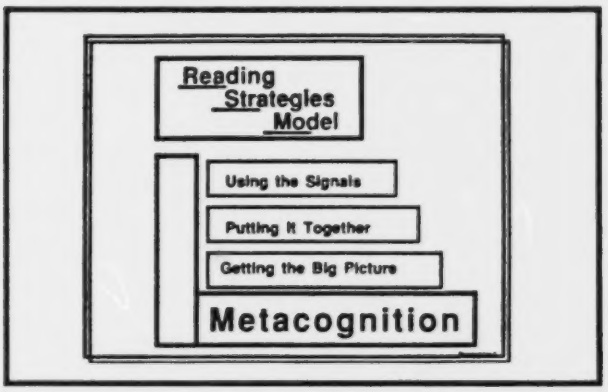
Models of the Reading Process

"Wisconsin Model" (T-4)

Discuss the fact that the model provides a visual organizer to summarize the process. (It's a model that has been adopted even for statewide dissemination of information about reading--in Michigan, Illinois, and Wisconsin.) The three factors interact as the reader applies a repertoire of strategies to the process. It is important to point out that "context" refers to "context of the situation", rather than the word associated with "context clues". This means that reading differs based on the context in which it occurs--classroom, office, subway, back porch--and the purposes and expectations associated with that situation.



"Model of Reading Strategies" (T-5)

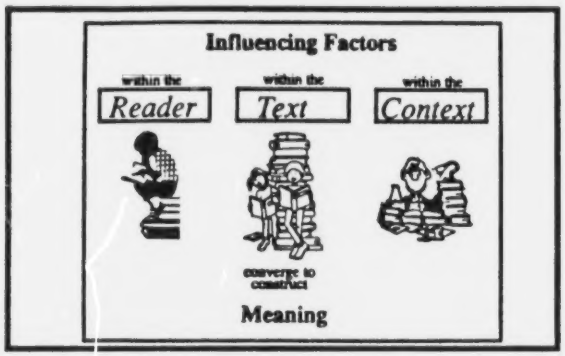


Suggest that the information that has been gathered from the last decade of research on the process of reading allows us to identify (still somewhat tentatively since more research needs to be done) a list of strategies that really do play a role in reading. This is of greater use than the traditional "scope and sequence" chart of skills, typically found in basal readers, that has been merely an arbitrary listing of skills that had no research base to support their validity. Giving consideration to a repertoire of strategies that you wish to help students develop provides a framework for organizing and guiding instruction. It also provides a "new look" at reading that should be kept in mind as the teacher approaches reading lessons, listens to students read, and interacts with students about the process.

Discuss Reading Strategies:

If you have time, you might ask participants to share what they have learned about reading from the preceding discussion. List these points on a blank transparency. Whether you go through the sharing or not, give a summary of some of the most important reading strategies and words describing the nature of the process using **T-7a** through **7e**. Indicate that while these are not the only strategies underlying reading, they are some of the most important, and others can be explored by referring to the model of reading strategies presented earlier.

Factors that Affect the Reading Process...

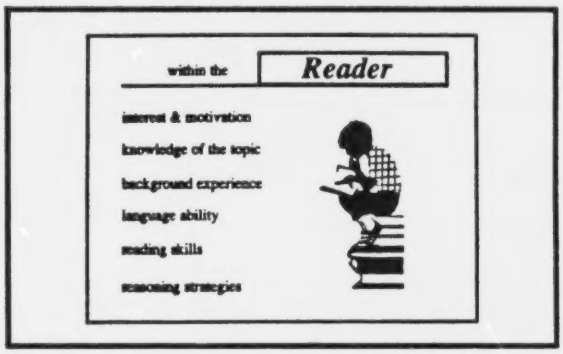


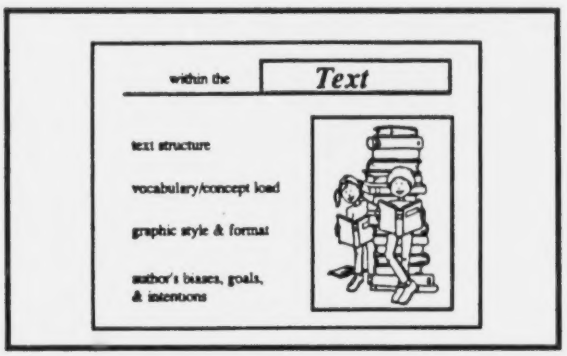
Factors converge... (T-6)

Discuss the fact that the reading process is affected by three categories of factors: those that are within the reader, those that are within the text, and those that are part of the context in which the reading occurs.

Factors within the Reader... (T-6a)

Factors within the reader include knowledge of the topic, reading skills, and reasoning strategies.





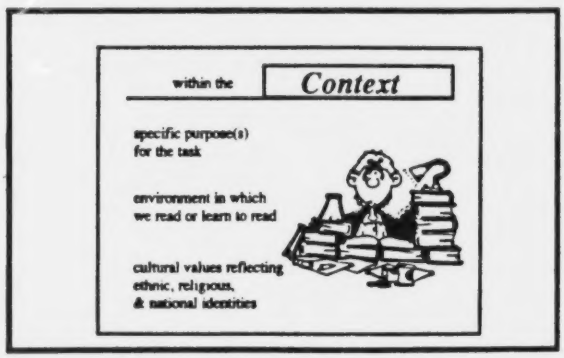
Factors within the Text... (T-6b)

Factors within the text include evidence of the author's biases, goals, and intentions, as well as structural and graphic characteristics.

Factors within the Context... (T-6c)

Factors within the context include the environment in which we read or learn to read; cultural values that reflect our identities; and specific purposes we develop for particular tasks.

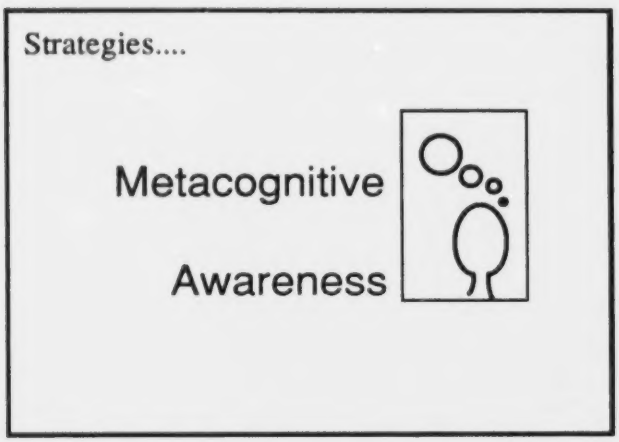
Source: (Garcia & Pearson, *Better Schooling for the Children of Poverty, Vol. II.*)


within the
Context
specific purpose(s) for the task
environment in which we read or learn to read
cultural values reflecting ethnic, religious, & national identities

Reading Strategies

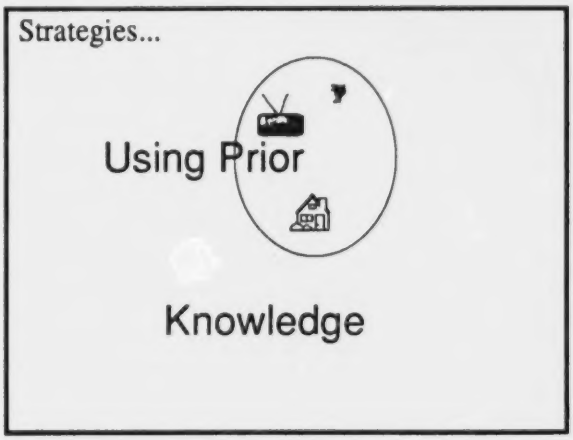
Metacognitive Awareness (T-7a)

The strategy related to "metacognitive awareness" might more aptly be described as "self-monitoring." In order to read effectively, the reader must have a knowledge of the processes involved and control those processes by asking mental questions, directing attention to efficient data-gathering points, disregarding irrelevant information, and using "fix-up" strategies when comprehension falters. This "metacognitive awareness" serves as a kind of umbrella for the other strategies applied during reading.



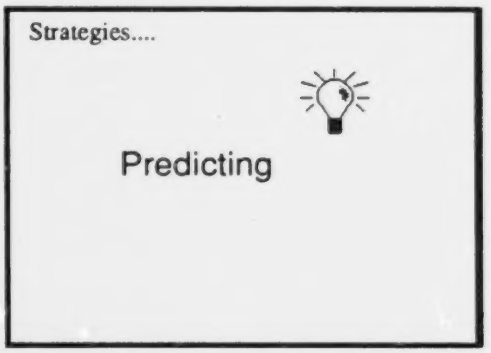
Prior Knowledge (T-7b)

While it has always been acknowledged that background knowledge plays a significant role in comprehension (indeed, basal readers have always included a section in which the teacher is instructed to have a brief discussion about the topic prior to reading a story), more current research indicates that it is a vital determinant of comprehension and, by implication, that time spent constructively developing background knowledge prior to reading is time very well spent. It helps to develop a purpose for reading, the motivation to drive the process, and a "schema" on which to hang the information that is encountered. It facilitates strategies of making inferences and predicting. There should be no time limits set on this instructional strategy but should be in keeping with the needs of the moment. It is significant to point out that sometimes the need is not to develop background knowledge, but rather to activate it, so that students become aware of the need to use what they know, apply it to the material they are reading.

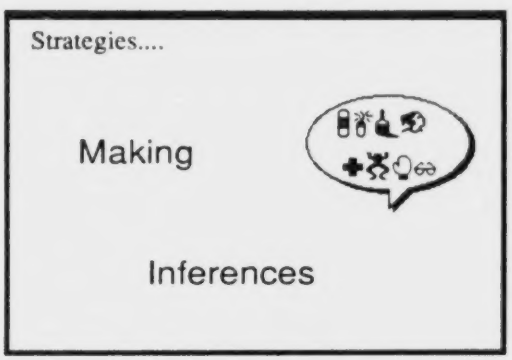


Prediction (T-7c)

Prediction is essential to reading. As stated by Frank Smith, "Prediction is the prior elimination of unlikely alternatives" (1985). It is essential that teachers help children understand and use this strategy in their reading by involving them as active predictors. Making predictions about the content of one's reading helps the reader apply relevant schemata or prior knowledge, keeps the reader actively involved, and maintains a focus on meaning--the goal of reading. It makes the process more efficient because the reader does not have to attend to every detail or be concerned with the exact meaning or pronunciation of every word. It frees the reader to attend to the overall structure and meaning of the text, fitting in details as they suit his or her purposes for reading. There are a number of instructional models that have been described and tried, and, in some cases, are being researched, that provide opportunities for students to develop predicting skills. But some of the best teaching strategies are ones that teachers develop and use intuitively once they understand the importance of developing this strategy.



Making Inferences (T-7d)



Children learn about the world by making inferences from the time they were born. Were it not so, they would be unable to sort through all of the stimuli that confront them and make sense of their experiences. They develop their own theory of the world based on the experiences they have and the inferences they make from those experiences. This same strategy operates automatically in language learning and will develop naturally as children learn to read if teachers recognize the fact that it is integral to the process and provide opportunities for open interaction about the content of their reading, as well as interaction that supports and validates the use of this strategy. This means that instead of discounting a student's interpretation of something read or dismissing the introduction of an element that seems far afield of the material read, the teacher should entertain the idea and ask the student to indicate how he or she came to that conclusion. In this way, the teacher holds the student accountable for answers offered, and at the same time, does not imply that there is always only one right answer--that to read accurately is to be able to come up with pat answers to factual questions.

Getting the Big Picture

Strategies....

Getting the big

Picture

It is important for teachers and students to understand that the goal of reading is to understand what a whole written piece is about, "to get the big picture." (This will vary, of course, depending on one's purpose for reading.) Whether it is referred to as the "main idea" or the "gist", the point is that the reader must develop an overall "semantic description" of the piece. (Traditional questions about "main idea" assume only one right main idea, but since reading is a very individual process, there may be legitimate variation.) The student should be able to state in a concise form the plot, theme, or premise of a piece of writing.

Characteristics of Independent Readers

Use **T's (8a-8c)** to discuss attributes of the reading process that are also important to keep in mind when helping students become independent readers. The reading process is characterized by:

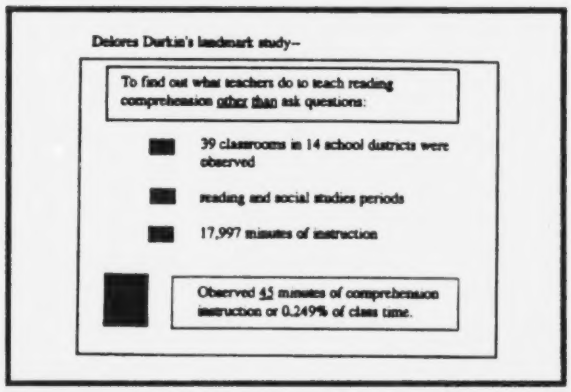
- **Active involvement (T- 8a)**
- **Flexibility (T-8b)**
- **Constructive approach (T-8c)**

This means that the reader cannot be passive or approach reading material in a rigid, routine way. The reader cannot expect to arrive at some simple interpretation of the material that is largely based on recall of facts or "getting the author's meaning"--a goal that is really impossible without discussing it directly with the author! This also means that the teacher must be keenly aware of the process and methods for helping students command the process.

Implications for Instruction..

What does the research say?

Research on Reading Comprehension Instruction (T-9a)


Delores Durkin's landmark study--
To find out what teachers do to teach reading comprehension other than ask questions:
39 classrooms in 14 school districts were observed
reading and social studies periods
17,997 minutes of instruction
Observed 45 minutes of comprehension instruction or 0.249% of class time.

Review Durkin's landmark study (1979) in which she conducted observations of 39 third through sixth grade classrooms (almost 18,000 minutes of instruction) to find out what teachers did to "teach" reading comprehension. Among the findings were that practically no comprehension instruction was seen but that comprehension assessment, usually carried on through interrogation, was common. Whether children's answers were right or wrong was the big concern. The study revealed only about 45 minutes (total!) of teachers doing anything besides asking questions. While a number of researchers in various fields had begun investigating reading comprehension a few years earlier, this study, in particular, served as an "attention-getter", and many teachers and researchers began taking a closer look.

Explain that while research continues to accumulate, and the debate is not yet concluded, many experts are citing research that does, in fact, demonstrate that reading comprehension can be taught. In an article entitled, "Can comprehension be taught? (*Educational Researcher*, Dec., 1988), the authors conclude by saying that "the results from this body of research suggest a strongly affirmative answer." For more information regarding the teaching of comprehension, cite the following:

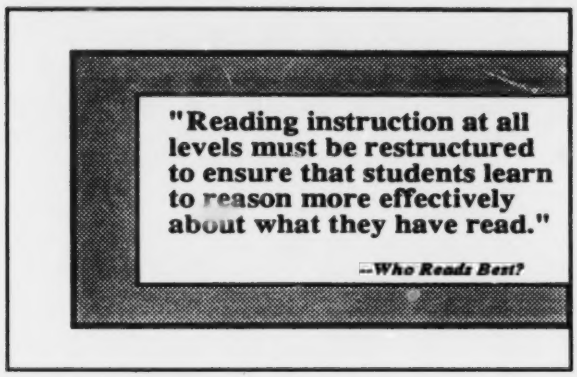
> "Research on teaching reading comprehension." Tierney & Cunningham, in P.D. Pearson, *Handbook of Reading Research.* New York: Longman.
>
> *Reading Comprehension Instruction*, 1783-1987. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Research about How Children are Doing (T-9b)

Review some of the general findings of the1986 National Assessment of Educational Progress, reported in ***Who Reads Best?, Factors Related to Reading Achievement in Grades 3, 7, and 11***. Some of the highlights are presented below and in the **Handout, pp. 11-12.**

Who Reads Best? (Results of National Assessment of Educational Progress) **(T-9b)**

- American teachers are using a variety of effective instructional approaches before,during, and after reading to develop comprehension skills of students, but poor readers report that their teachers are more likely to use teaching techniques that emphasize basic reading skills rather than comprehension and critical thinking.


"Reading instruction at all levels must be restructured to ensure that students learn to reason more effectively about what they have read."
--Who Reads Best?

- The less able readers (those with average performance in the bottom 25 percent on NAEP's proficiency scale) also reported doing less independent reading than good readers. But, in comparison with good readers, poor readers seem to be even more limited in their school reading experiences than in the reading they do on their own. This suggests that poor readers may be able to manage more varied reading experiences than are currently being provided by schools.

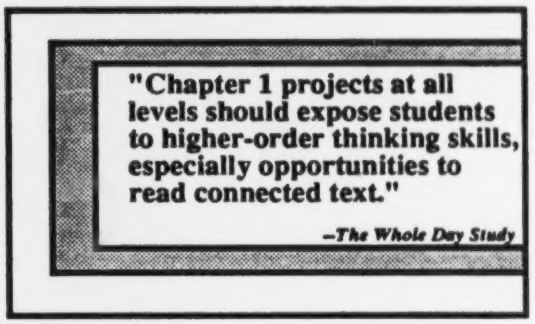
- NAEP also found that students at all three grade levels still struggle with tasks that require them to interpret or defend what they have read. For example, on a task designed to assess students' ability to read and respond critically, only 19 percent of the third graders, 38 percent of the seventh graders, and 41 percent of the 11th graders produced satisfactory responses.

- When material is difficult for them, the best readers move beyond sounding out words or asking for help to rereading material and using its context. The more proficient readers develop a repertoire of strategies that help them gain more effective control of the reading process, but the poor readers may have their old, less-effective strategies reinforced.

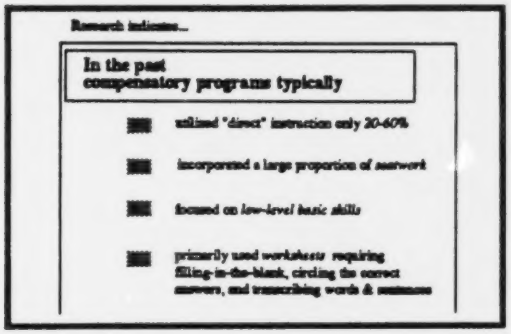
- As in past NAEP studies, *Who Reads Best?* reports that on average, minority students and those from disadvantaged urban communities perform poorly relative to the national population at each grade level. For example, the average proficiency levels for these students in grade 11 was only slightly above the national average for students in the seventh grade. "The journey towards equal educational opportunity in the United States has been marked by steady progress, but it is by no means complete."

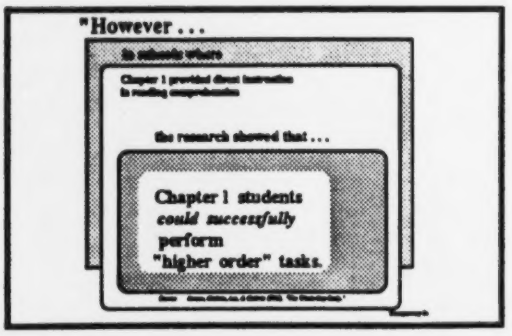
Research about Chapter 1 (T-9c, 9d, 9e, 9f)

- Discuss the fact that Title I/Chapter 1 was born in an era when behavioral objectives and instructional technology fragmented what was to be learned into many discrete skills. Skills were organized in sequences that teachers used to lead children by careful steps toward fluent reading. Many Title I programs were originally structured in this way, and many Chapter 1 programs still are. This is reflected in classroom practices that assume a rigid hierarchy of skills through which the Chapter 1 student rarely progresses rapidly enough to reach the so-called "higher-order" comprehension skills.

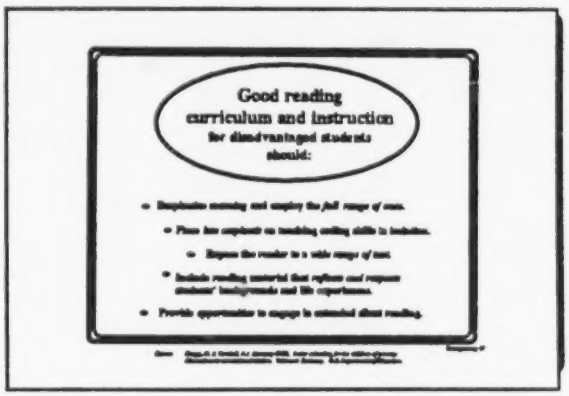

"Chapter 1 projects at all levels should expose students to higher-order thinking skills, especially opportunities to read connected text."
–*The Whole Day Study*

- Explain that this observation was confirmed in the National Assessment of Chapter 1: *The Current Operation of the Chapter 1 Program* and the substudy, *The Whole Day Study*. Researchers criticized the almost exclusive focus on lower-order academic skills. As noted by other writers, (T-9c) "current approaches to compensatory education systematically under challenge disadvantaged students, and that continual drill and practice limits Chapter 1 students' opportunities to progress to more challenging material." Further support for the need to challenge Chapter 1 students can be discussed using **T's 9d and 9e.**



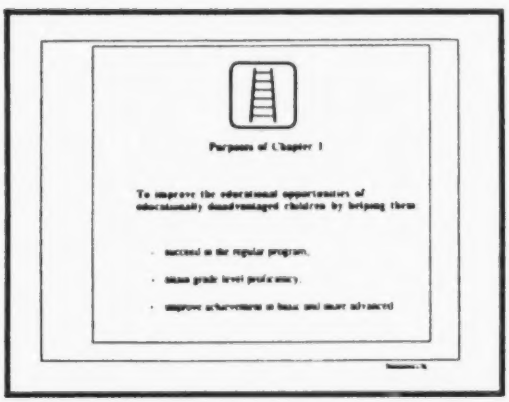


- In the more recent *Better Schooling for the Children of Poverty* , Volume I, a synthesis of information regarding the "conventional wisdom" of teaching reading is presented. A critique is offered and an alternative is set forth that reflects current research and thinking on the teaching of reading. Standards for Curriculum and Instruction in Literacy from this study are presented on **T-9f .**



Refer participants to the **Handout, pp. 13-14** for **Highlights of the *Better Schooling* study.**

Purposes of Chapter 1



Remind participants that under the reauthorization of Chapter 1, it was deemed important to include language that specifically states that improving achievement in both basic and advanced skills must be a purpose of Chapter 1 programs.

"Advanced skills" is defined in Section 1471 of the Augustus F. Hawkins-Robert T. Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988:

"The term 'more advanced skills' means skills including reasoning, analysis, interpretation, problem-solving, and decision making as they relate to the particular subjects in which instruction is provided under programs supported by this chapter."

Since it is specified in the law that "advanced skills" in reading will be evaluated using the **reading comprehension** subtest of a standardized test, it is important to make instruction in reading comprehension a focal point of Chapter 1 programs.

Instructional Trends

Use **T's 10a-10g** to summarize trends in reading comprehension instruction. Also refer participants to **Handout, pages 15-16,** from *Reading Comprehension Instruction-1783-1987*, for a more elaborated list of "Trends in American Reading Comprehension Instruction." (The NAEP report also provides a look at trends in performance and is available from the Nation's Report Card, Princeton, NJ.)

Reading Trends

The focus for reading has moved from...

Letters and words to...

Meaning and thought...

From...

Overcoming language deficits to...

Building on language development...

From...

Teaching skills in isolation to...

Teaching strategies in context...

From...

Reading as a set of skills to...

Reading as thought guided by print...

From...

Finding meaning in a text to...

Sharing meaning with an author...

From...

Separating reading and writing instruction to...

Teaching reading and writing as complementary behaviors...

From...

Minimal competency to...

Unlimited student achievement.

So what do we do on Monday?

Need for A Vision (T-11)

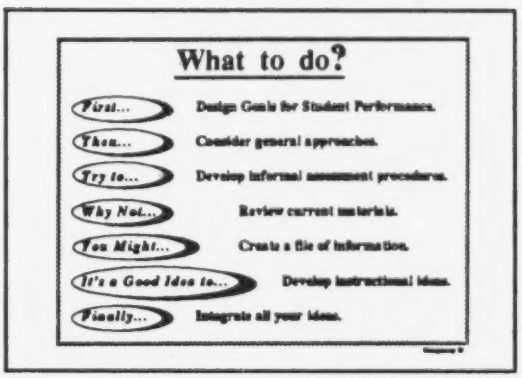
Point out that as stated by Tierney and Cunningham (*Research on Teaching Reading Comprehension)* the first need is for a vision (**T-11**). Refer participants to **Handout, pages 17-18** . The information is presented with sections highlighted. Read and discuss the highlighted sections if you choose.

Emphasize that the important thing is to use what has been learned about the reading process and the teaching of reading to re-conceptualize one's instructional program:

First... Design goals for student performance

Then... Consider general approaches (direct teaching, active teaching, whole language, thematic approach..)

Try to... Develop some informal assessment procedures (based on current research and information on assessment)



Why not... Review your current instructional materials and think about how to revise or adapt them to approach the teaching of reading in a way that is more in line with the current thinking.

You might ... Create a file of information about specific instructional strategies (Reciprocal Teaching, ReQuest, KWL...)

It's a good idea to... Develop a collection of instructional ideas for providing instruction on reading strategies, e.g., ideas for teaching prediction, use of dialogue markers, using functional words...)

Finally... Working from your vision of what your program should be, integrate all of the ideas and strategies you have designed or gathered into a cohesive and meaningful instructional program.

Keep in Mind...General Guidelines

(The following list is elaborated in an article in the **Handout, pages 18-27.**)

1. **Consider the ecology of learning**. Create a learning situation in which students feel comfortable taking risks, trying out their ideas, and interacting with written materials and with each other.

2. **Build a language base for reading**. Provide many opportunities for language enrichment and build on what they know.

3. **Develop meaningful situations for reading**. Assign tasks that have "real-life" purposes and use reading and writing to solve problems.

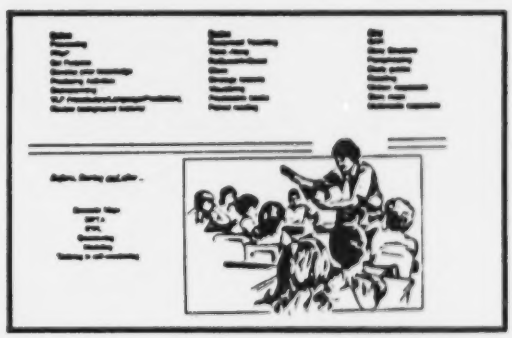
4. **Promote flexibility in reading**. Vary purposes for reading, the type of material to which students are exposed, and the print setting in which the reading occurs.

5. **Encourage interaction with material**. Help develop critical thinking or advanced skills by providing opportunities for thinking.

Remember, remember...that reading must actively involve the reader and be flexible and constructive.

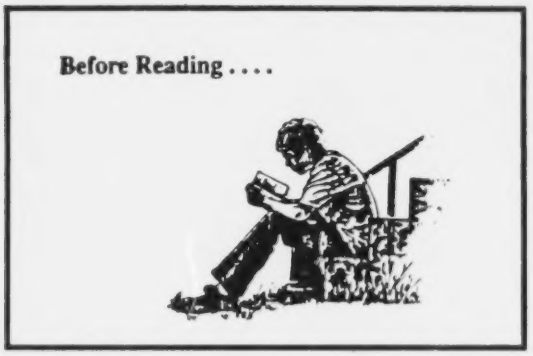
Then...Instructional Ideas

Use format depicted in the **Handout, page 28,** to discuss instructional strategies that may be used before, during, and after reading. (The strategies listed on this page of the handout are examples of ones appearing in the literature, ones which have had varying degrees of research attention.) Emphasize that these are a small set of examples. There are many others, and teachers should also be encouraged to develop their own based on their knowledge of the reading process.



Two or three strategies under each category are included in the workshop. You may simply review them or you may want to select some written material and have participants try out some of the strategies. (There is no substitute for active involvement in the process when the goal is to help participants internalize these ideas!)

Before reading...(T-13a, 13b)



Previewing

One previewing technique (Graves, Prenn, and Cooke, 1985) involves three parts: (1) the activation of prior personal experiences that are relevant to the text; (2) the building of necessary background knowledge for the text; (3) the establishment of an organizational framework for the text that is consistent with the framework the author uses to present information. **(Handout, page 29)**

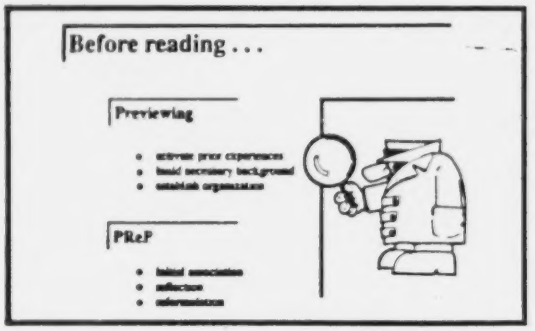
PReP

The **Pre Reading Plan** (Handout, page 30-31) is a three-step instructional procedure for teachers to use before assigning reading to their students. **PReP** calls for a group discussion before students read the text. The teacher must review the portion of text to be assigned to select a word, phrase, or picture of text to stimulate group discussion about a key concept in the text. There are three phases to the **PReP.**

1. **Initial Associations with the Concept.** The teacher says, "Tell me anything that comes to mind when..(you hear this word, see this picture, etc.)..."

2. **Reflections on Initial Associations**. The students are asked, "What made you think of (the response given by each of the students during phase 1)?"

3. **Reformulation of Knowledge.** After each student has had an opportunity to think and tell about what triggered their ideas, the teacher asks, "based on our discussion, have you any new ideas about..(the word, the picture, etc.)?"



The Prereading Plan (Langer, 1984) is an instructional activity that benefits both teachers and students. Teachers become aware of 1) the levels of concept sophistication possessed by the individuals in a group; 2) the language the students have available to express their knowledge about the topic; and 3) the amount of concept instruction necessary before textbook reading can be assigned. **(Handout, page30-31)**

During Reading...(T-14a, 14b)

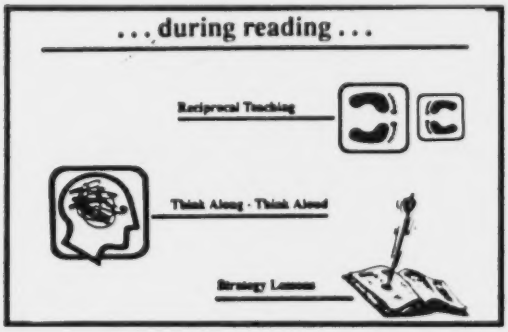
Reciprocal Teaching

. . . . during reading . . . .

Reciprocal teaching (Palincsar and Brown, 1985) is an effective approach for developing constructivist, process-oriented reading comprehension abilities. In this approach, students take turns assuming the role of the teacher through a structured dialogue.

The teacher models four different strategies and the students have opportunities to practice these strategies. Students are asked to (1) **summarize** in a simple sentence the paragraph that was read, (2) **generate a question** about the paragraph that was read to ask a fellow student, (3) **ask for clarity** (or resolution) of anything in the text that was unclear, and (4) **make a prediction** about what will happen next. Students are shown how to do this by teacher modeling. **(Handout, p. 32)**

Think-Along



During the think-along process (Farr, 1989), the teacher reads a story or an excerpt aloud to students, who follow along in their copies. As the teacher reads, she thinks aloud so the students can think along with her.

In brief, the teacher reads aloud and verbalizes the kind of things any good reader thinks about while trying to comprehend new material. After students experience think-alongs with the teacher, they can pair up and use think-alongs with each other, coaching each other after oral reading. Students may also use *checklists* to record quickly and easily the think-along strategies demonstrated by the teacher and special *bookmarks* to remind them of strategies to use during silent reading. **(Handout, p. 35)**

Strategy Lessons

A strategy lesson (Goodman & Burke, 1980) is a plan for instruction that focuses on aspects of written language for which students need support. The lessons may grow out of reading materials that students are not processing effectively or the need for expanded reading experiences from which most students can benefit. The material for each strategy lesson is carefully constructed or selected to provide a real, whole language context while focusing on a selected reading strategy. Strategy lessons are most effective when they are used with students who need them and when they are used at the critical moment. **(Handout, p. 36)**

After reading... (T-15a, 15b)

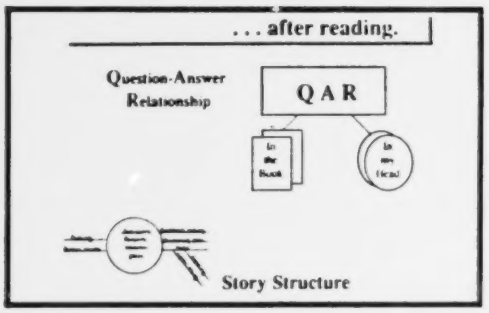
QARs

In several studies, Raphael (1982, 1986) demonstrated that at-risk as well as regular students are capable of generating and answering questions that enhance their comprehension and lead to independent processing. She designed four types of QARs:
(1) **text-based QARs** in which the answers are "right there," i.e., explicitly stated in the text; (2) **text-based QARs** in which the student has to "think and search" for relevant information throughout the text; (3) **knowledge-based QARs** in which the reader has to read text to understand the question, but the answer is not in the text; and (4) **knowledge-based QARs** in which the student can answer the question without reading the text.

In the beginning stage of this process, the teacher accepts total responsibility for the five key elements of the activity: (1) **assigning the text,** (2) **generating the questions**, (3) **providing answers**, (4) **identifying the QAR**, and (5) **providing a justification for the QAR** identified. Eventually, control is released to the student after guided practice. **(Handout, p.41)**

Story Structure

Instruction in story parts and their order can have a fairly quick and powerful effect on children's knowledge of story structure and on their ability to comprehend stories (Spiegel and Fitzgerald, 1986). Spiegel and Fitzgerald outline five instructional activities to use to enhance student use of story structure based on story grammar, which defines the elements in a story and their order. **(Handout, page 43)**



- **Story Production.** Students are given selected parts from a story map, e.g. Setting. Then they must: develop a group story adding elements as they go and teacher writes on a chart, or students develop independent stories based on the same story element or pairs of students collaborate in the development of story elements, mix them up and give them to another group to assemble.

- **Sequencing.** Students place story parts in the appropriate order, as predicted by the story grammar. Students receive all of the sentences for a story element as one chunk.

Story Structure (cont.)...

- **Macrocloze.** An entire story part is deleted from student copies of a story. Students identify missing element.

- **Group Inquiry**. Class is divided into three groups. Each group has a different incomplete version of the same story. Through asking questions, each group tries to find out what information the other groups have on their versions and thus reconstruct the entire story.

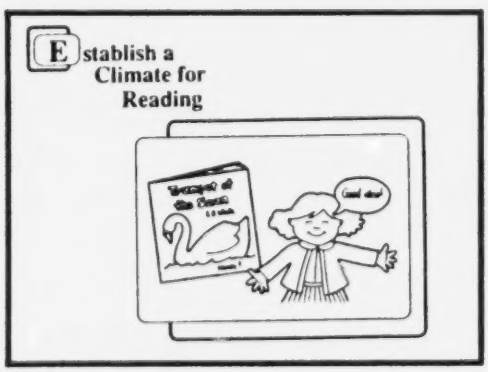
- **Story Organization Questions**. Using a set of generic story questions, the children might be given several story elements and guided through the dictation, writing, or retelling of a story by asking the set of questions, e.g., How did _____ feel? What did _____ want (or decide)? How did it turn out?

Spiegel and Fitzgerald found that the use of these instructional activities focused on story structure enhanced students' ability to produce more fully formed stories and significantly more new information in retellings, and their reading comprehension is improved as measured by a set of literal and inferential questions.

Wrapping it Up...

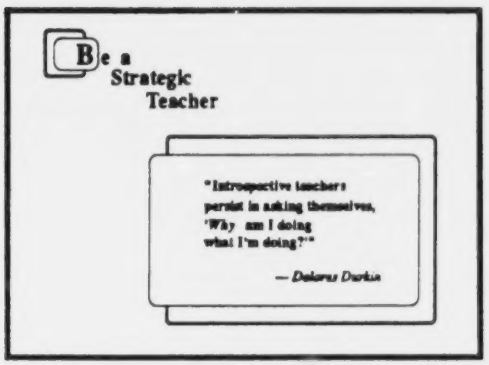
To present a conclusion for the information provided in the workshop, emphasize the following three points:

Establish a Climate for Learning (T-16)



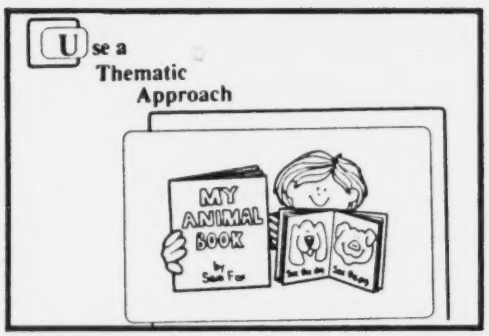
- Encourage risk-taking
- Provide opportunities for open interaction and discussion
- Adapt to higher noise levels resulting from more cooperative (students working with students) and collaborative (teacher working with students) activities
- Provide more activities that simulate real-life endeavors

Become a Strategic Teacher (T-18)


Be a
Strategic
Teacher
"Introspective teachers persist in asking themselves, 'Why am I doing what I'm doing?'"
— Dolores Durkin

- Focus instruction on the development of strategies
- Encourage and support flexibility in students' thinking
- Always think in terms of variety

Consider a Thematic Approach to Instruction (T-17)



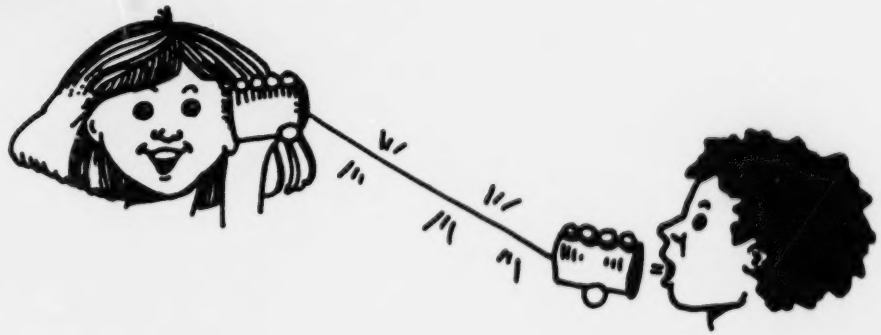
- Use a topic or concept as a theme around which to structure and organize instruction, rather than thinking of reading and writing as subjects which are taught according to a scope and sequence chart of skills
- Integrate all of the language arts within this framework

Get the Big Picture...

...Need for a Vision

Reading Interview

How did you learn to read?

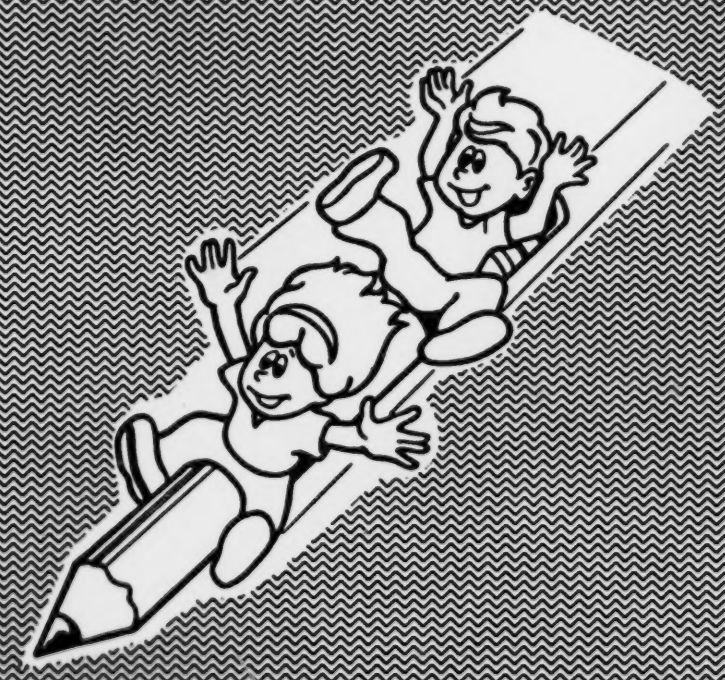


Do you think you are a good reader?

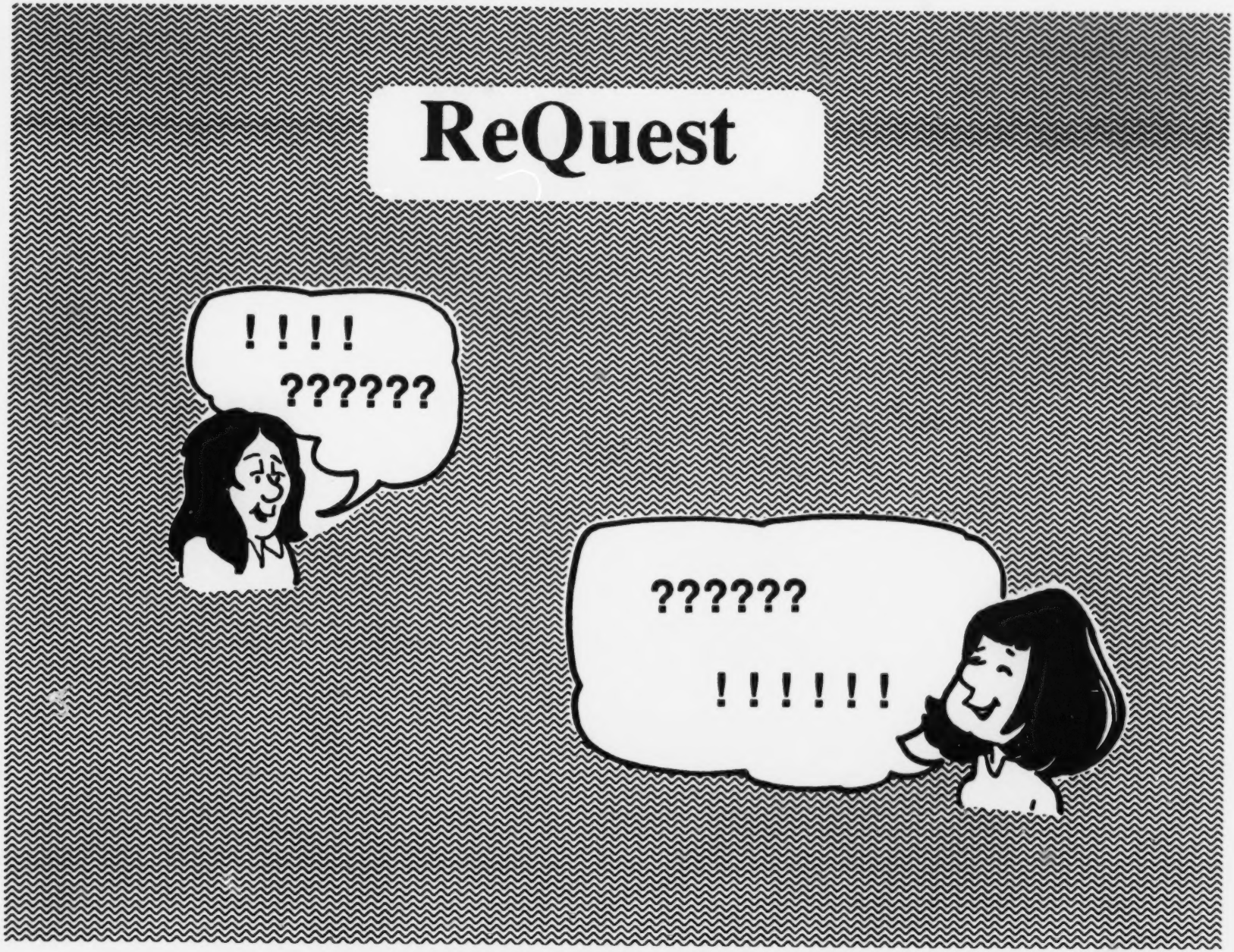
Transparency A

Reading/Writing

Log

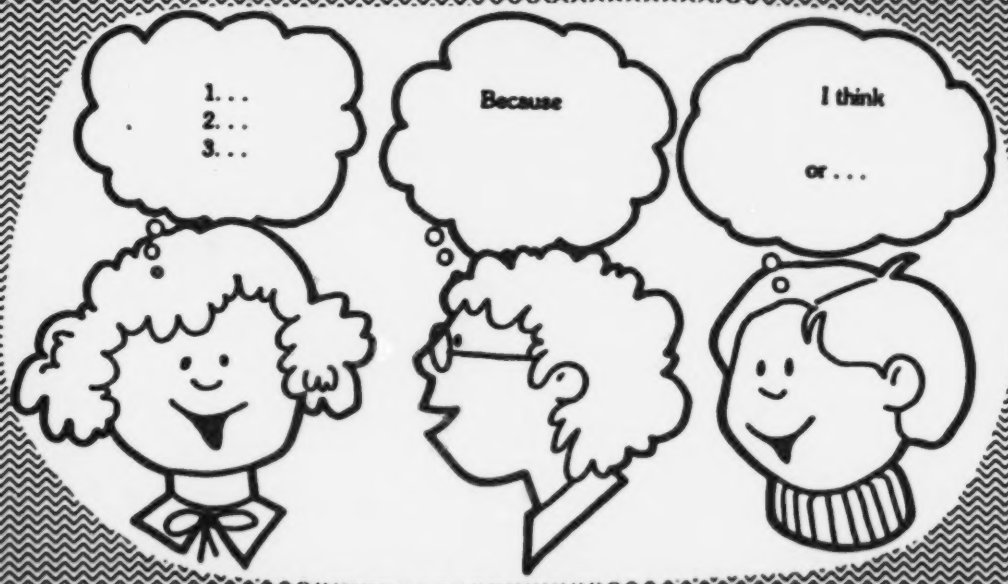


Transparency B



Transparency C

Thinkalong In Pairs Or Threes



Transparency D

Thinking - along Strategies

guessing

using prior knowledge

predicting

adjusting predictions

setting

role-playing

reaction & opinion analysis

emotional involvement

summarizing

mental pictures

with-holding judgment

re-reading

using hands & body

Transparency E

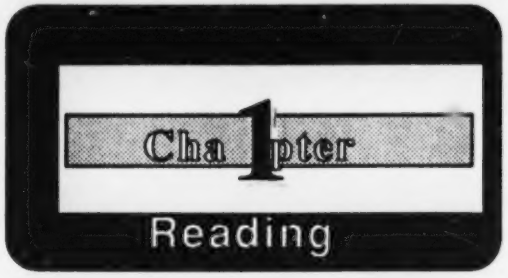
Understanding Reading

What do I do on Monday?

Understanding the

Process

Transparency 1a



Workshop Goals

As a result of this workshop, participants will:

1. understand current research and theory on reading comprehension through example and illustration,

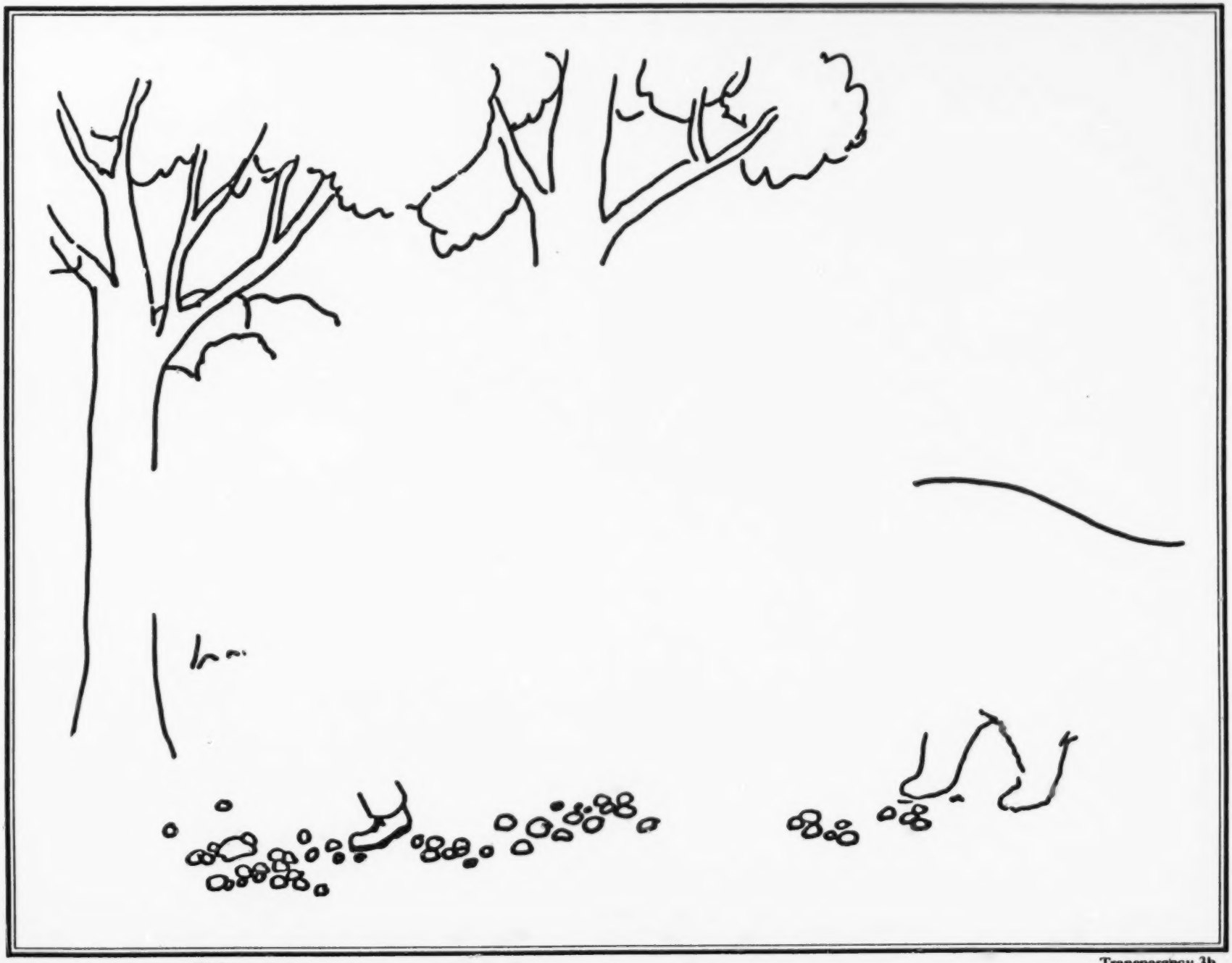
2. examine their own instructional practices in light of current research and theory,

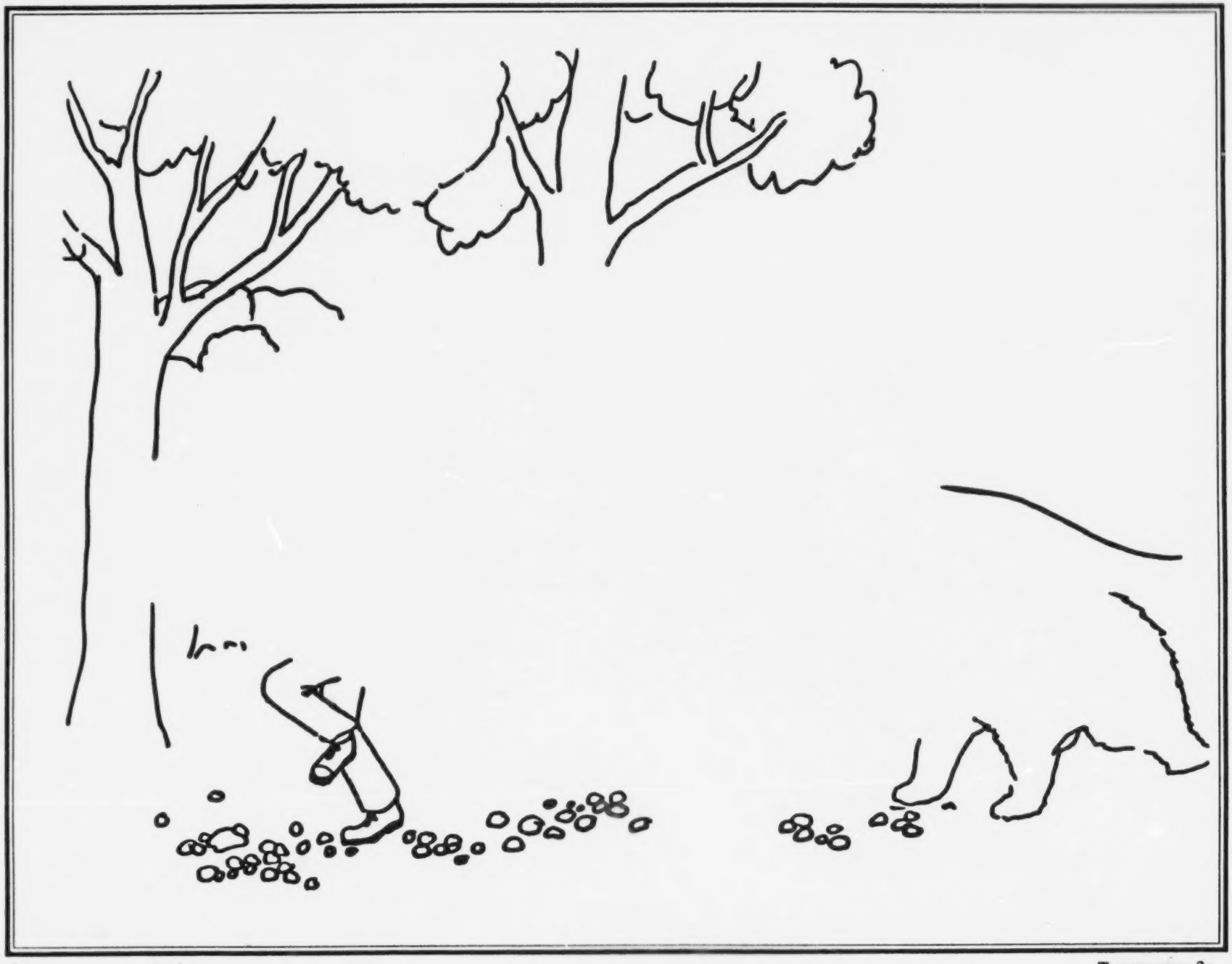
3. apply current research and theory on reading comprehension to the development and adaptation of instructional practices in Chapter 1 programs.

Transparency 2

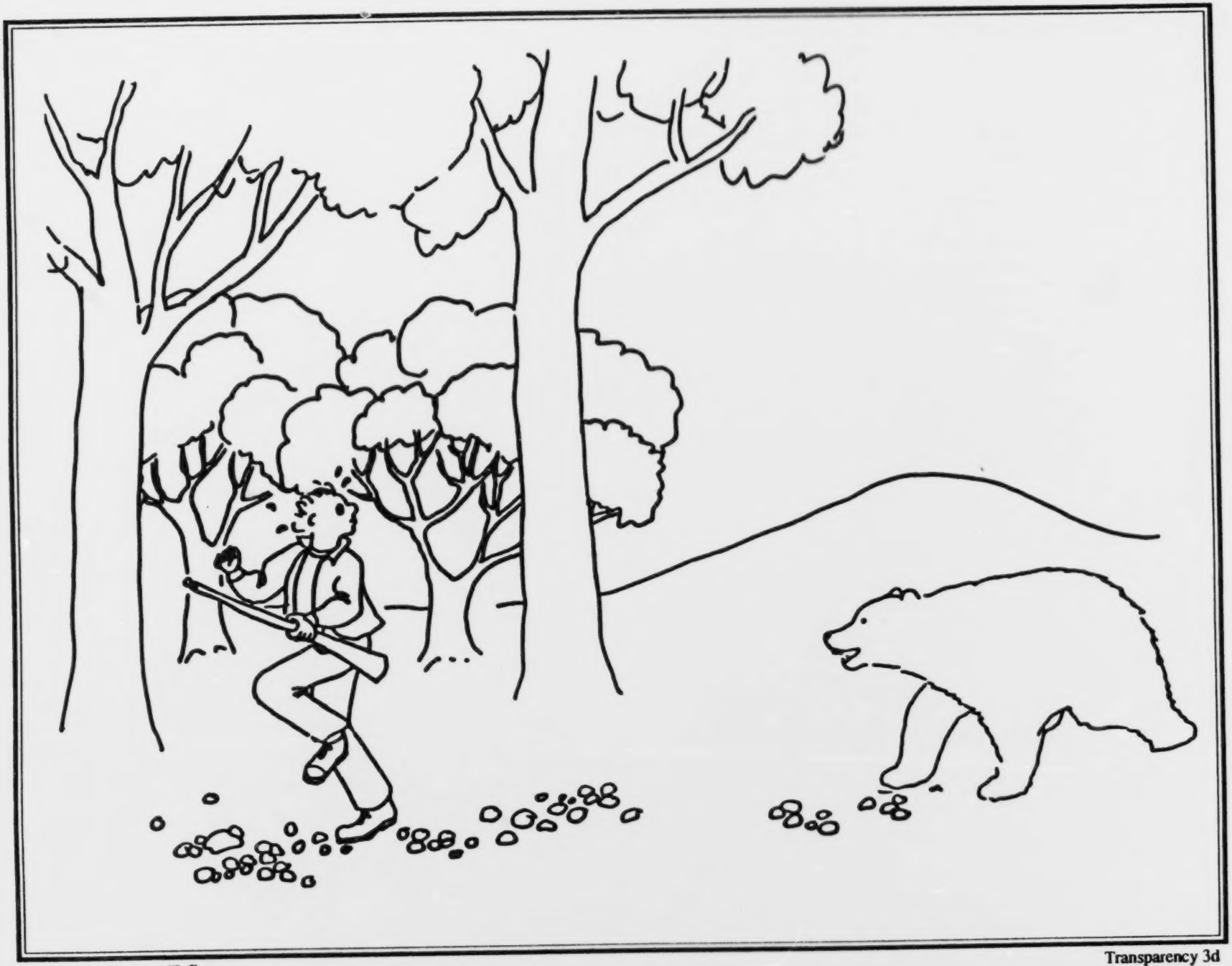
Transparency 3

Transparency 3a





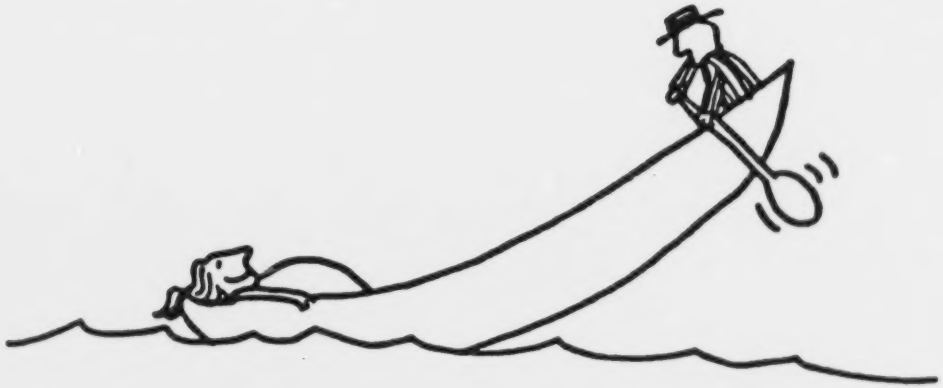
Transparency 3c



Transparency 3d

Transparency 3e

Transparency 3f



Transparency 3g

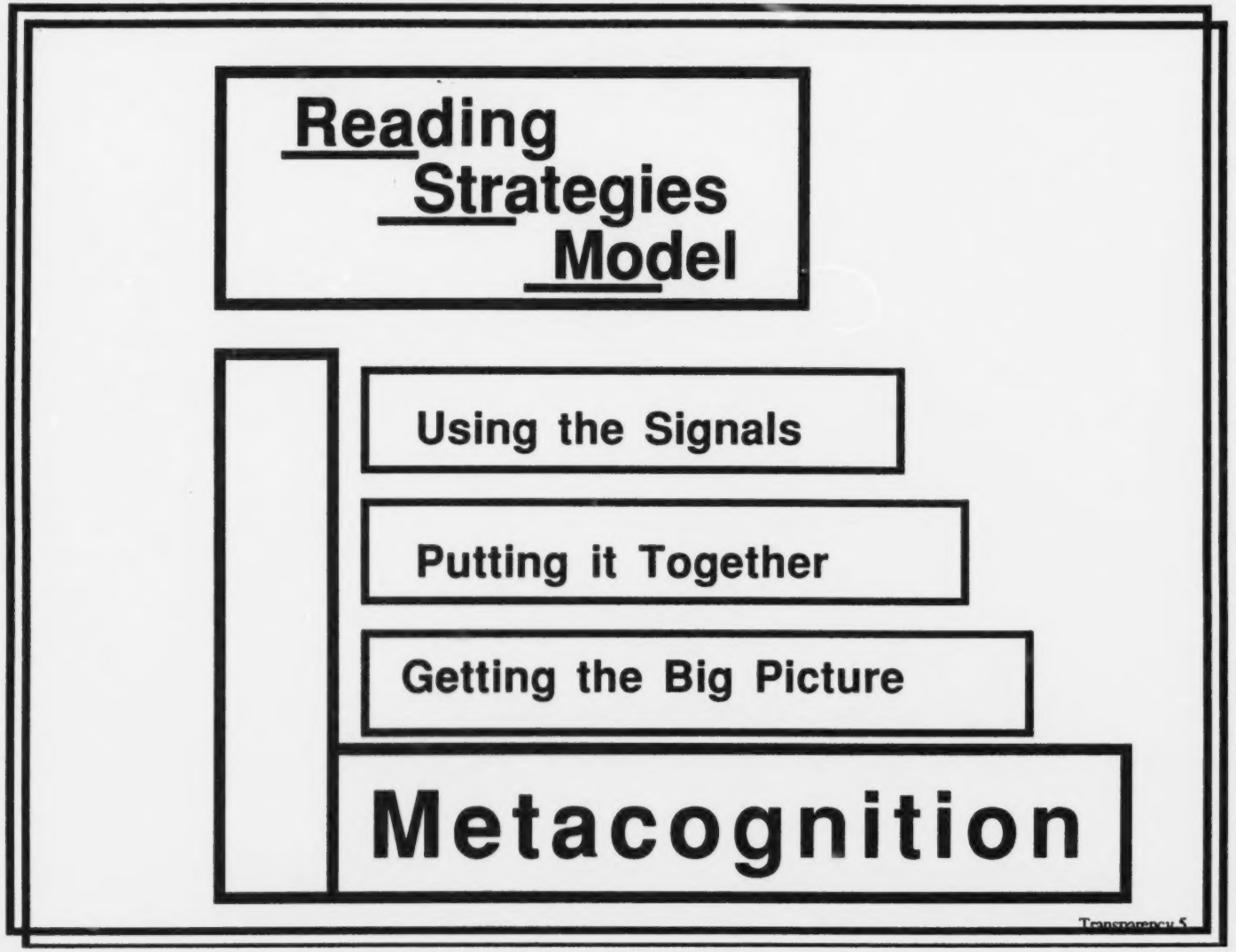
Interactive Model

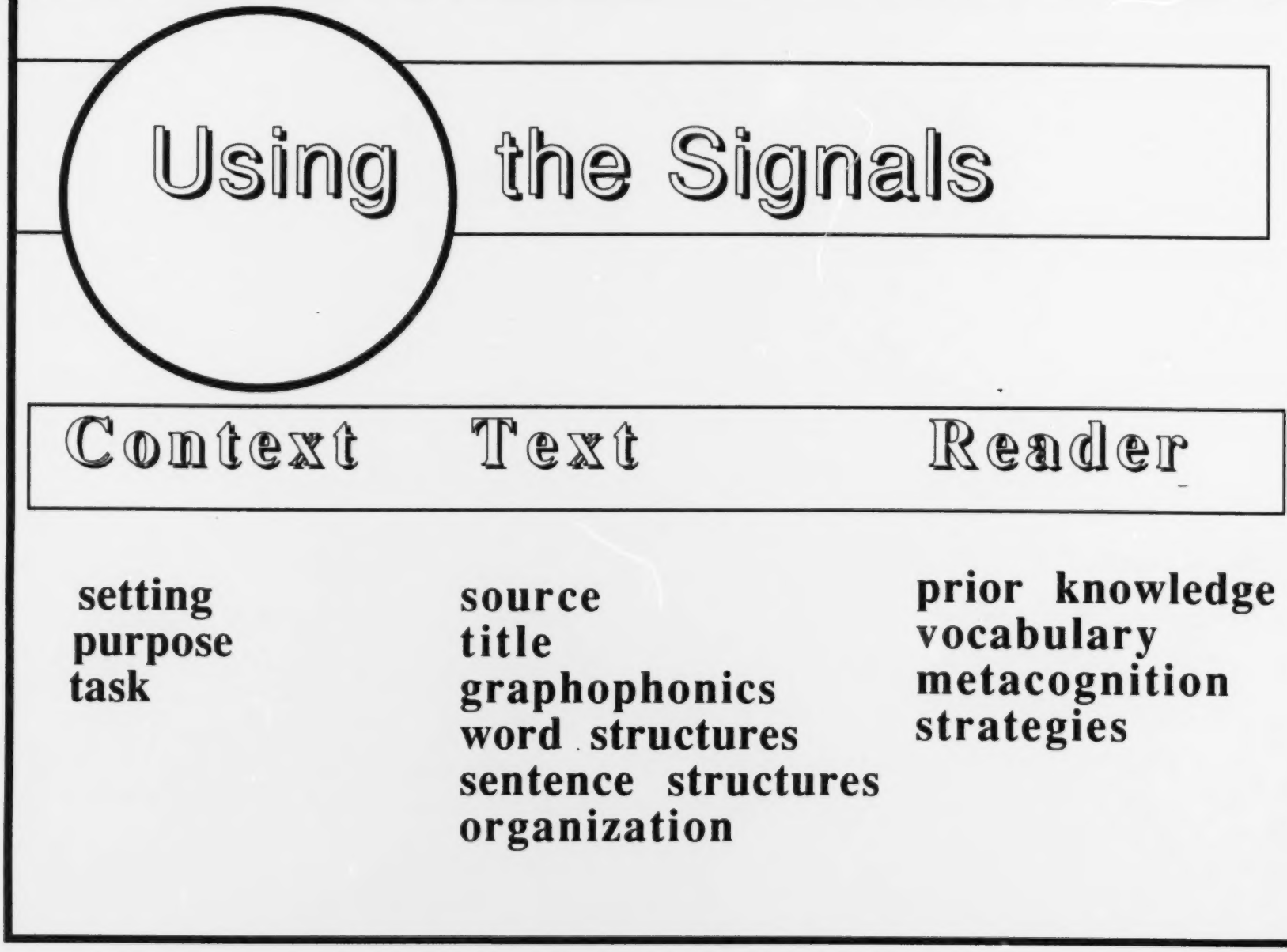
for

Reading Comprehension

Transparency 4

Adapted from: *A Guide to Curriculum Planning in Reading (1986).*
Doris M. Cook, Supervisor, Reading Education.
Madison: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.


Reading Strategies Model
Using the Signals
Putting it Together
Getting the Big Picture
Metacognition
Transparency 5



Transparency 5a

Putting It Together

Problem-solving strategies

Predict

- question
- confirm
- reject
- take risks

Infer

- shift schema
- develop concepts
- rate information
- differentiate

Retrieve

- suspend judgment
- ignore & continue
- relate to background
- connect ideas
- compare & contrast
- test hypotheses
- resolve conflict

Transparency 5b

Getting the Big Picture

Overview	Type	Product
type	narrative/expository	paraphrase
setting	genre	summary
content	topic	plot
	organization	theme
	story elements	list

Transparency 5c

Influencing Factors

within the *Reader*

within the *Text*

within the *Context*

converge to construct

Meaning

Transparency 6

within the **Reader**

interest & motivation

knowledge of the topic

background experience

language ability

reading skills

reasoning strategies

Adapted from: Cooper, J.D. (1982). Teaching reading comprehension: A practical approach. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. Garcia, G.E. & Pearson, P.D. (1990). "Modifying reading instruction to maximize its effectiveness for 'disadvantaged' students." Better schooling for the children of poverty: Alternatives to conventional wisdom. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Transparency 6a

within the **Text**

text structure

vocabulary/concept load

graphic style & format

author's biases, goals, & intentions

Adapted from: Cooper, J.D. (1982). Teaching reading comprehension: A practical approach. Boston Houghton Mifflin Co. Garcia, G.E. & Pearson, P.D. (1990). "Modifying reading instruction to maximize its effectiveness for 'disadvantaged' students." Better schooling for the children of poverty: Alternatives to conventional wisdom Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Transparency 6b

within the **Context**

specific purpose(s)
for the task

environment in which
we read or learn to read

cultural values reflecting
ethnic, religious,
& national identities

Adapted from: *Cooper, J.D. (1982). Teaching reading comprehension: A practical approach. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.*
Garcia, G.E. & Pearson, P.D. (1990). "Modifying reading instruction to maximize its effectiveness for 'disadvantaged' students." Better schooling for the children of poverty: Alternatives to conventional wisdom. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.

Strategies....

Metacognitive Awareness

Transparency 7a

Strategies...

Using Prior Knowledge

Transparency 7b

Strategies....

Predicting

Transparency 7c

Strategies....

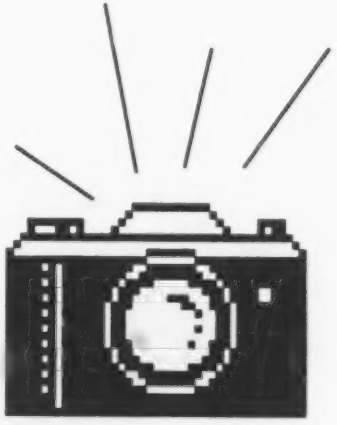
Making

Inferences

Transparency 7d

Strategies....

Getting the big Picture



Transparency 7e

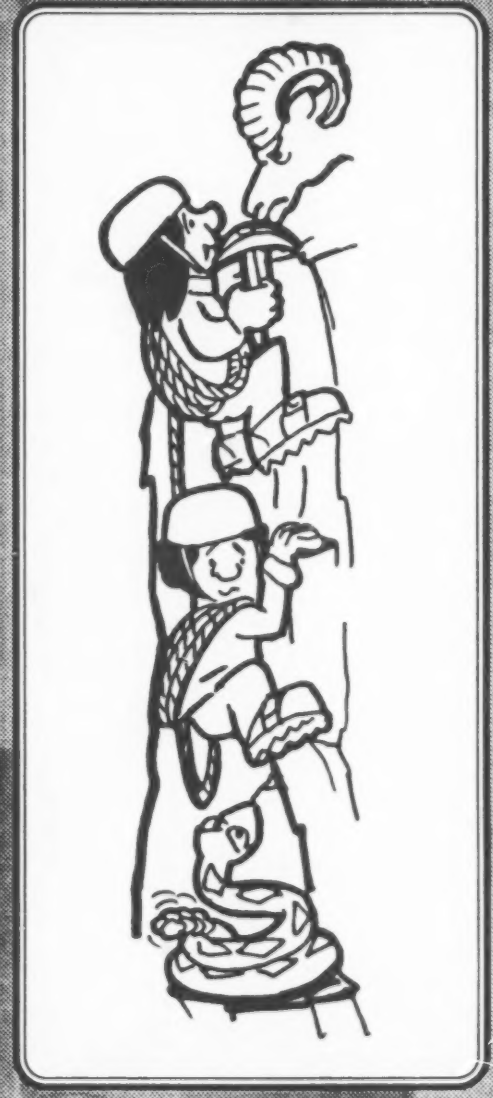
The strategic reader must be . . .

Actively Involved

Transparency 8a

The strategic reader must be . . .

F l e x i b l e

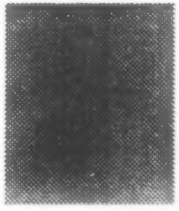


Transparency 8b

Delores Durkin's landmark study--

To find out what teachers do to teach reading comprehension other than ask questions:

- 39 classrooms in 14 school districts were observed
- reading and social studies periods
- 17,997 minutes of instruction



Observed 45 minutes of comprehension instruction or 0.249% of class time.

Source: Durkin, D. "What classroom observations reveal about reading comprehension instruction", Reading Research Quarterly, 1978-79.

"Reading instruction at all levels must be restructured to ensure that students learn to reason more effectively about what they have read."

--- Who Reads Best?

Transparency 9b

"Chapter 1 projects at all levels should expose students to higher-order thinking skills, especially opportunities to read connected text."

--The Whole Day Study

Transparency 9c

Research indicates...

In the past compensatory programs typically

- utilized "direct" instruction only *20-60%*
- incorporated a large proportion of *seatwork*
- focused on *low-level basic skills*
- primarily used *worksheets* requiring filling-in-the-blank, circling the correct answers, and transcribing words & sentences

Source: Rowan, Guthrie, Lee, & Guthrie (1986). "The Whole Day Study." The Design and Implementation of Chapter 1 Instructional Services: A Study of 24 Schools.

Transparency 9d

"However . . .

in schools where

Chapter 1 provided direct instruction in reading comprehension

the research showed that . . .

Chapter 1 students *could successfully* perform "higher order" tasks.

Source: Rowan, Guthrie, Lee, & Guthrie (1986). "The Whole Day Study."

Transparency 9e

Good reading curriculum and instruction for disadvantaged students should:

- Emphasize *meaning* and employ the *full range of cues.*
- Place *less emphasis* on teaching coding skills in isolation.
- Expose the reader to a *wide range of text.*
- Include reading material that *reflects and respects* students' backgrounds and life experiences.
- Provide *opportunities* to engage in extended silent reading.

Transparency 9f

Source: *Knapp, M. & Turnbull, B.J. (January 1990). Better schooling for the children of poverty: Alternatives to conventional wisdom. Volume I: Summary. U.S. Department of Education.*

Purposes of Chapter 1

To improve the educational opportunities of educationally disadvantaged children by helping them:

- succeed in the regular program,
- attain grade-level proficiency,
- improve achievement in basic and more advanced

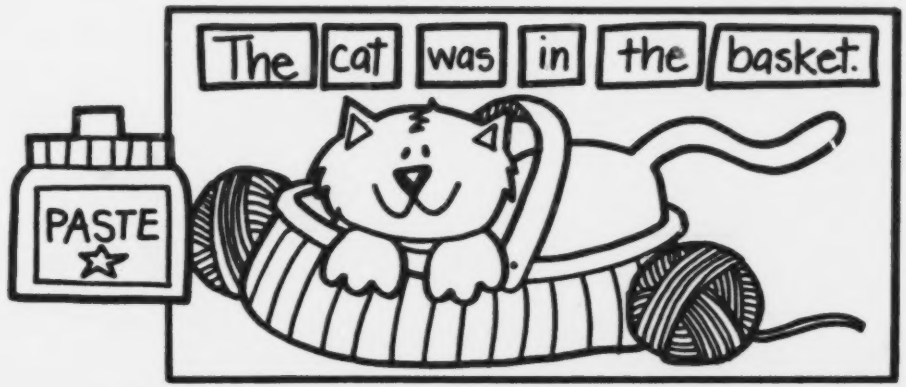
Transparency 9g

Reading Trends

The focus for reading has moved from...

Letters and words to...

Meaning and thought...



Transparency 10a

From...

Teaching skills in isolation to...

Teaching strategies in context...

From...

Overcoming language deficits to...

Building on language development...

Transparency 10c

From...

Finding meaning in a text to...

Sharing meaning with an author...

Transparency 10d

From...

Separating reading and writing instruction to...

Teaching reading and writing as complementary behaviors...

Transparency 10e

From...

Reading as a set of skills to...

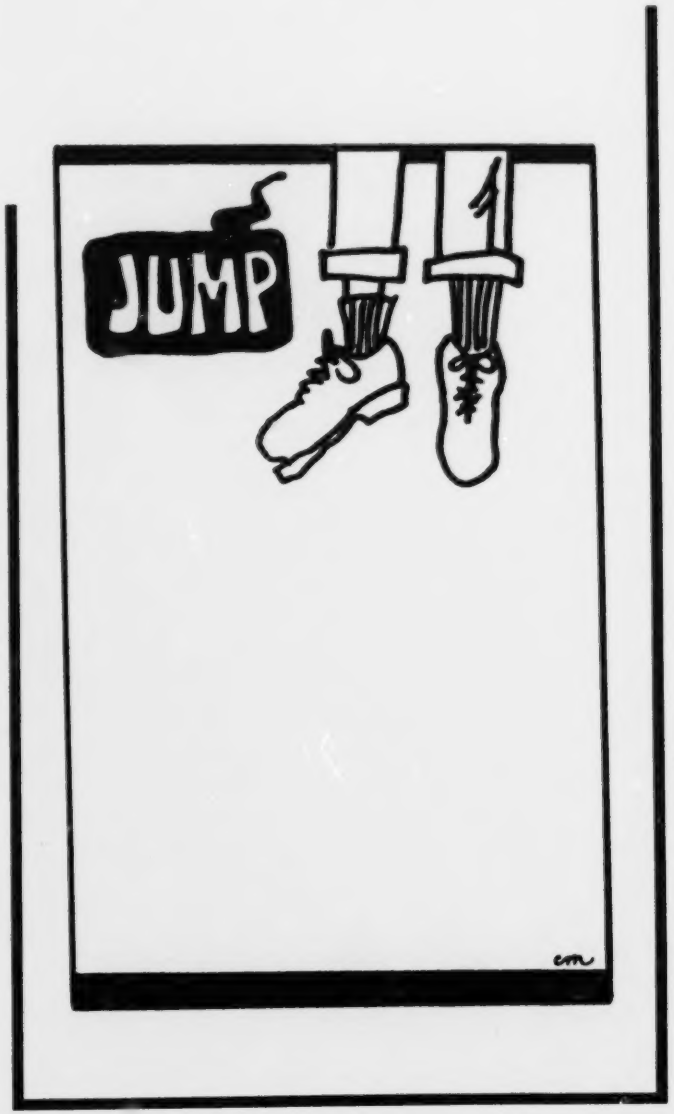
Reading as thought guided by print...

Transparency 10f

From...

Minimal competency to...

Unlimited student achievement.



Transparency 10g

Need for a

Vision . . .

Transparency 11

What to do?

First...	**Design Goals for Student Performance.**
Then...	**Consider general approaches.**
Try to...	**Develop informal assessment procedures.**
Why Not...	**Review current materials.**
You Might...	**Create a file of information.**
It's a Good Idea to...	**Develop instructional ideas.**
Finally...	**Integrate all your ideas.**

Transparency 12

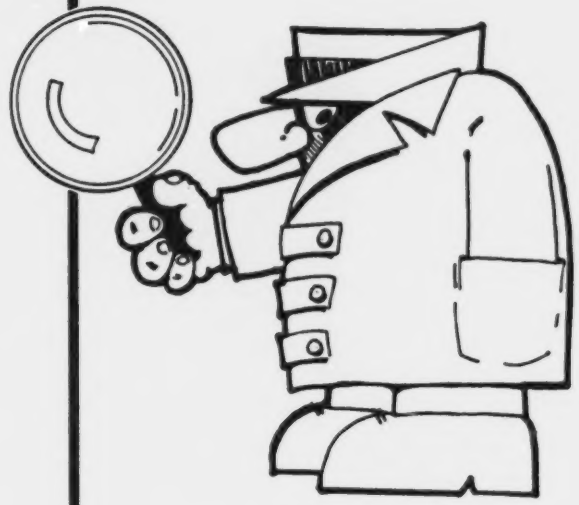
Before Reading . . . .

Transparency 13a

Before reading . . .

Previewing

- activate prior experiences
- build necessary background
- establish organization



PReP

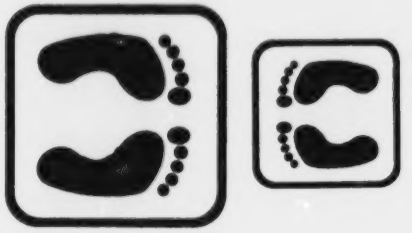
- initial association
- reflection
- reformulation

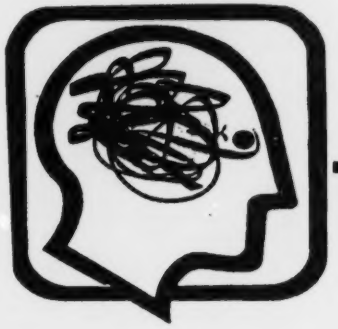
. . . . during reading . . . .

Transparency 14a

. . . during reading . . .

Reciprocal Teaching





Think Along - Think Aloud

Strategy Lessons

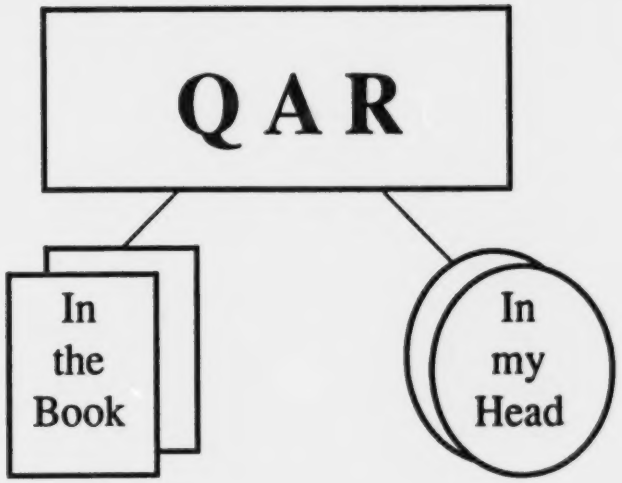
Transparency 14b

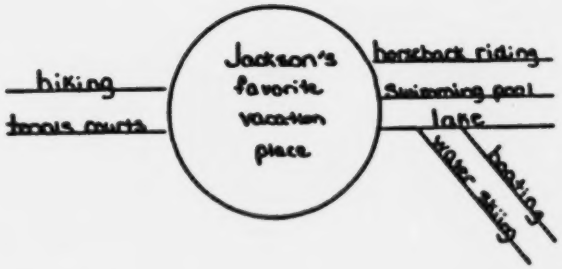
. . . . after reading.

Transparency 15a

. . . after reading.

Question-Answer Relationship



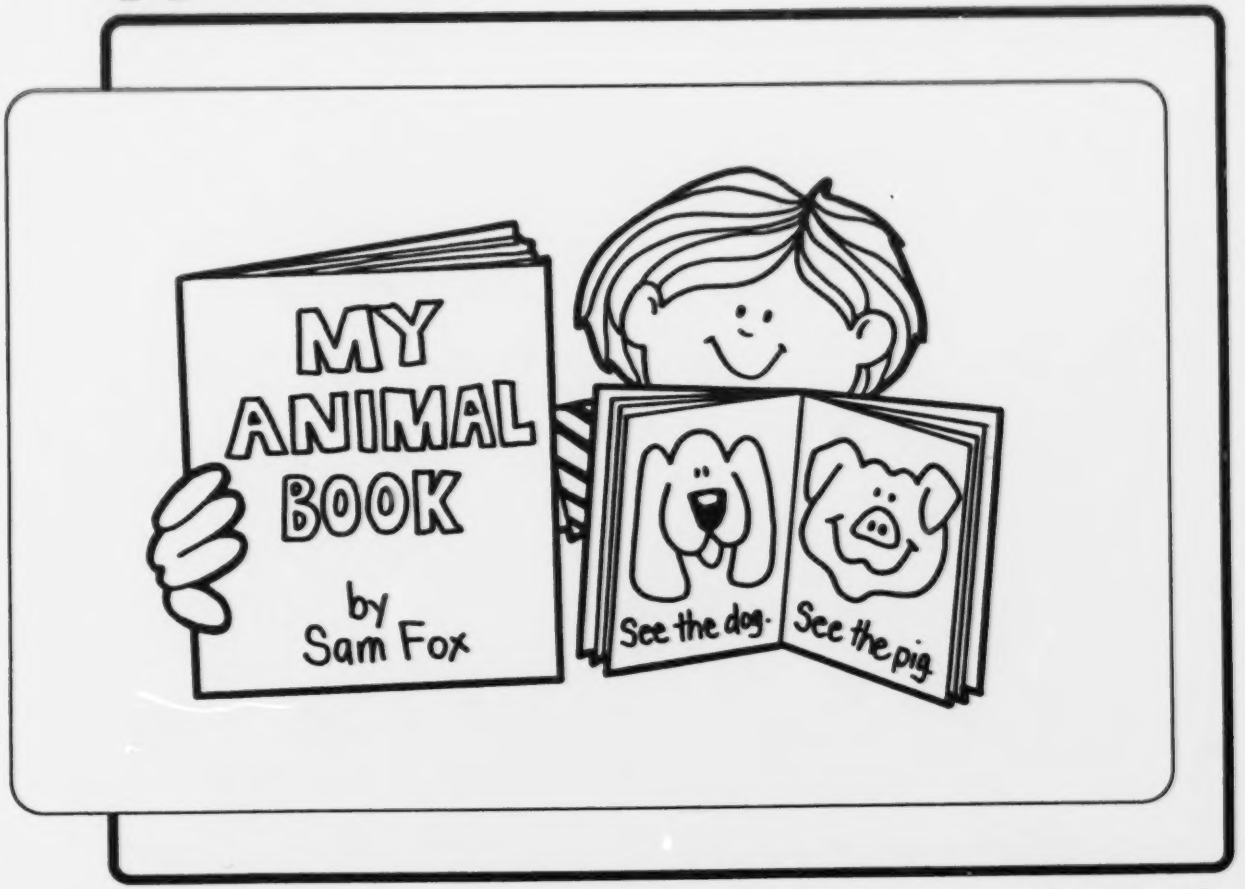


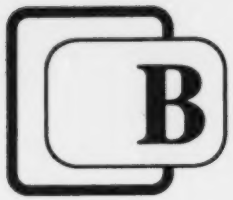
Story Structure

Establish a Climate for Reading

Transparency 16

Use a Thematic Approach





Be a Strategic Teacher

"Introspective teachers persist in asking themselves, '*Why* am I doing what I'm doing?'"

--- Delores Durkin

Reading Interview

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. When you are reading and you come to something you don't know, what do you do?

2. Do you think that (insert teacher's name) is a good reader? OR
   Who is a good reader that you know?

3. What makes (that person) a good reader?

4. Do you think (that person) ever comes to something she/he doesn't know when she's/he's reading?

5. (If "yes") What does (that person) do when she/he comes to something she/he doesn't know?

   (If "no") Suppose (that person) does come to something that she/he doesn't know. Pretend. What do you think (that person) will do about it?

6. If you knew that someone was having difficulty reading, how would you help her/him?

7. What would a/your teacher do to help that person?

8. How did you learn to read?

   What did (others/you) do to help you learn?

9. What would you like to do better as a reader?

10. Do you think you are a good reader? Why?

Additional Notes:

(Adapted from Reading Interview by Carolyn L. Burke)

Reading/Writing Log

A Reading/Writing Log or a Dialogue Journal is a place, such as a bound composition book, in which a student can carry on a private written conversation with the teacher for an extended period of time. Try out the process by carrying on such a conversation with a partner using any of the sentence starters below. (For more information, see the ERIC article on pages 49-50.)

The last book I read was _____ .

It was . . .

I like to write when . . .

For me, reading is . . .

THE THREE SPINSTERS

PART 1

Once upon a time a poor woman lived with her daughter in a stone cottage not far from the queen's castle. The daughter was lazy and would not spin, and her lack of industry constantly annoyed the mother. One day, the mother lost her patience entirely and came at her daughter with a broomstick. The maiden cried out loudly.

The queen happened to be driving by in a golden coach pulled by six white horses. When the queen heard the cries, she ordered her coachman to stop, swept into the house, and demanded to know why the mother was beating her daughter.

The woman was ashamed to admit to having such a lazy daughter, so she said, "Oh, your majesty, I cannot keep the girl from spinning! She is always at the wheel, and I cannot afford all the flax that she demands daily!"

"Well," said the queen, "I love the sound of a spinning wheel, and I have a fine supply of flax. Let me take the girl to my castle. She shall live in comfort and shall spin there to her heart's content."

The mother agreed at once to this plan, and so the maiden returned to the castle with the queen. There, the queen led her to three rooms, each filled to the ceiling with bundles of flax.

"Now," said the queen, "you shall spin this flax for me. When you are finished, you shall have my eldest son for a husband. I know you are poor, but your industry is dowry enough. Would that more were like you, my dear!"

PART 2

Distraught, the maiden paced back and forth. If she lived to be 100, she could never spin all that flax! Not knowing what else to do, she sat in the window and began to cry.

Three strange women were passing by. One had a broad, flat foot; the second had a large lip that hung down over her chin; the third had an enormous thumb. They stopped and called to the maiden, "What ails you, my dear?"

The girl explained her problem. The women agreed to help her on one condition. They said, "Will you promise to invite us to your wedding, introduce us as your cousins, and ask us to sit at your table and share your food?"

The maiden agreed gladly, and the odd women came in at once and began to work. The first drew out the flax and worked the treadle with her broad foot. The second moistened the thread with her large, protruding lip. The third twisted the thread with her gigantic thumb and rapped with her fingers on the table. Each time she rapped, there fell a heap of beautifully spun flax. And so they worked, deftly threading, licking, and twisting, day after day.

When the queen came to the spinning rooms, the maiden hid the women from sight and showed off the finished bundles as if they were her own work. The spinsters continued to work diligently until all the flax was spun. Then they took their leave, saying to the girl, "Do not forget what you promised, child!"

When the queen saw the completed work, she began at once to plan for the wedding. The prince rejoiced at the prospect of having such a clever and diligent wife.

The queen came one day to discuss the guest list and to ask what names the bride wished to add. The queen had invited noble families, wealthy merchants, and kings and queens from neighboring lands. The maiden thought of how the three women would look amid such elegant company.

PART 3

"I have three cousins," said the girl, "who have always been kind to me. May I invite them?"

"Certainly, my dear," said the kindly queen.

And so the three strange women came to the wedding, and the girl greeted them warmly, introduced them as her cousins, and had them eat with her at the wedding table.

The prince was surprised and wondered how his lovely bride could have such strange-looking relatives. He asked the first how she got such a broad, flat foot. "From treading!" said the first.

He asked the second how she got such a large, protruding lip. "From licking!" said the second.

He asked the third how she got such an enormous thumb. "From twisting!" said the third.

The prince was appalled. He proclaimed that from then on his beautiful bride should never again touch a spinning wheel. And so the girl escaped from that tiresome work once and for all.

AND THE ROCK CRIED OUT

Ray Bradbury

The raw carcasses, hung in the sunlight, rushed at them, vibrated with heat and red color in the green jungle air, and were gone. The stench of rotting flesh gushed through the car windows, and Leonora Webb quickly pressed the button that whispered her door window up.

"Good Lord," she said, "those open-air butcher shops."

The smell was still in the car, a smell of war and horror.

"Did you see the flies?" she asked.

"When you buy any kind of meat in those markets," John Webb said, "you slap the beef with your hand. The flies lift from the meat so you can get a look at it."

He turned the car around a lush bend in the green rain-jungle road.

"Do you think they'll let us into Juatala when we get there?" "I don't know."

"Watch out!"

He saw the bright things in the road too late, tried to swerve, but hit them. There was a terrible sighing from the right front tire, the car heaved about and sank to a stop. He opened his side of the car and stepped out. The jungle was hot and silent and the highway empty, very empty and quiet at noon.

He walked to the front of the car and bent, all the while checking his revolver in its underarm holster.

Leonora's window gleamed down. "Is the tire hurt much?"

"Ruined, utterly ruined!" He picked up the bright thing that had stabbed and slashed the tire.

"Pieces of a broken machete," he said, "placed in adobe holders pointing toward our car wheels. We're lucky it didn't get all our tires."

"But why?"

"You know as well as I." He nodded to the newspaper beside her, at the date, the headlines:

October 4th, 1983: United States,
Europe Silent!
The radios of the U.S.A. and Europe are dead. There is
a great silence. The War has spent itself.

It is believed that most of the population of the United States is dead. It is believed that most of Europe, Russia, and Siberia is equally decimated. The day of the white people of the earth is over and finished.

LINCOLN

A boy in a bright blue ski jacket and Maine hunting boots stood on a snowy runway. Under rumpled black hair his crooked nose and wide brown eyes gave him an expression of good humor, although he was not amused at this moment. Yesterday he had left Boston and laid over in Anchorage in high spirits. Now he was about to run back to the friendly jet that had carried him across Alaska to this barren Arctic outpost.

Suddenly, a cloud of frozen fog swirled over him. He could not see the plane, or the sky, or the flat snowscape that rolled endlessly out beyond the airport. Wrapped in an Arctic whiteout, he could have been upside down or sidewise for all he could tell. And so he stood still. In a few moments he was standing in the sunshine again, and the terror of the tundra blew off.

He turned and ran to the airport terminal, his face happy with purpose. He was going to do what he had come to Barrow, Alaska, to do. He did not look back again.

The Education of a Driving Teacher

Darrell Zegers

Several years ago when our oldest daughter turned 14, my wife and I let her get a learner's permit to drive. My wife decided to do the instructing. She also decided the kids should know how to drive a straight shift.

The only straight shift we have is the old pick-up. It has a 390-cubic-inch motor and is a four-speed.

One night when I came home from work my wife said, "I took Sis for her first driving lesson in the old truck today."

"I know," I said. I could tell by the two six-inch-deep trenches in the drive and the 50 pounds of grass, dirt and gravel imbedded in the garage door."

She took offense. "OK, buddy, if you can do any better, be my guest."

"Fine," I replied.

The next day was Saturday, so Sis and I prepared for a lesson. I threw our old dog in the back because he always liked to ride. This time I drove out of the driveway so just in case things went sour and the old truck got to roaring it wouldn't waken my wife. I didn't want to hear that I wasn't any better teacher than she was.

Several blocks from home, I put Sis behind the wheel.

That's when I learned two things about teen-age women drivers: They don't even start the motor without turning the radio to a rock station at 750 decibels-that's 40 more than the noon whistle if you're standing directly under the water tower-and they have no ankle joint in their right leg. They use their whole leg to operate the footfeed and it either goes all the way to the floor or all the way off.

We were sitting at a stop sign down by the highway when a carload of young boys pulled up behind and started blowing their horn. Sis got a case of the giggles, jammed her right leg to the floor on the footfeed and let her left foot slide off the clutch. The old truck gave a giant leap, not unlike that of a Brahma Bull coming out of the chute at the State Fair.

That wouldn't have been so bad if the force of the take-off hadn't pulled her foot back off the footfeed. That made the truck slow suddenly. The ankle-less leg rammed the footfeed back to the floor, and we went into a series of seven lurches.

All I can remember is hearing that old dog fly back against the tailgate and then come forward and ram his head into the cab. This happened 19 times before the truck finally shuddered and died. I know this because I counted the dents the dog made in the back of the cab.

"Well, I believe that's enough for today," I said. "You're getting the idea." I took the wheel, got the truck refired and drove home.

"You go on in the house," I said. "In case your mother is up, keep her busy while I carry the dog back to his pen."

The dog's been a little wacky ever since. He's not mean. But there is not a man in the state of Iowa big enough to get him in the back of that truck again.

Well, I turned the instructing over to my wife. Two years flew by, and it was time to try for the driver's license. My wife and I took Sis to Oskaloosa one Saturday morning. The examiner was a pale-looking older gentleman. I told my wife I hoped his heart was good.

In one smooth move, the engine and the radio both went wide open. All we could see as they shot out of the parking lot was the examiner's hat stuck to the inside of the rear window.

As my wife and I stood in the lot hoping somehow for their safe return, we know they were still moving--we could hear Bruce Springsteen wailing in the distance. Finally, we saw our car come screeching into the lot.

"There's no way she'll get her license today," my wife said. "How much do you want to bet?" I asked. I was right, of course. I knew there was no way that guy was going to ride with her again.

With hocked gems financing him, our hero bravely defied all scornful laughter that tried to prevent his scheme. "Your eyes deceive," he had said. "An egg, not a table correctly typifies this unexplored planet." Now three sturdy sisters sought proof, forging along sometimes through calms vastness, yet more often over turbulent peaks and valleys. Days became weeks as many doubters spread fearful rumors about the edge. At last from nowhere welcome winged creatures appeared, signifying momentous success.

The procedure is actually quite simple. First you arrange things into different groups. Of course, one pile may be sufficient depending on how much there is to do. If you have to go somewhere else due to lack of facilities that is the next step, otherwise you are pretty well set. It is important not to overdo things. That is, it is better to do too few things at once than too many. In the short run this may not seem important, but complications can easily arise. A mistake can be expensive as well. At first the whole procedure will seem complicated. Soon, however, it will become just another facet of life. It is difficult to foresee any end to the necessity for this task in the immediate future, but then one never can tell. After the procedure is completed one arranges the materials into different groups again. Then they can be put into their appropriate places. Eventually they will be used once more and the whole cycle will then have to be repeated. However, that is part of life.

Louis slowly got up from the mat, planning his escape. He hesitated a moment and thought. Things were not going well. What bothered him most was being held, especially since the charge against him had been weak. He considered his present situation. The lock that held him was strong but he thought he could break it. He knew, however, that his timing would have to be perfect. Louis was aware that it was because of his early roughness that he had been penalized so severely-much too severely from his point of view. The situation was becoming frustrating; the pressure had been grinding on him for too long. He was being ridden unmercifully. Louis was getting angry now. He felt he was ready to make his move. He knew that his success or failure would depend on what he did in the next few seconds.

Every Saturday night, four good friends get together. When Jerry, Mike, and Pat arrived, Karen was sitting in her living room writing some notes. She quickly gathered the cards and stood up to greet her friends at the door. They followed her into the living room but as usual they couldn't agree on exactly what to play. Jerry eventually took a stand and set things up. Finally, they began to play. Karen's recorder filled the room with soft and pleasant music. Early in the evening, Mike noticed Pat's hand and the many diamonds. As the night progressed, the tempo of play increased. Finally, a lull in the activities occurred. Taking advantage of this, Jerry pondered the arrangement in front of him. Mike interrupted Jerry's reveries and said, "Let's hear the score." They listened carefully and commented on their performance. When the comments were all heard, exhausted but happy, Karen's friends went home.

With one end of the vehicle in such a position, the wooden implement was totally useless. A different tool might remedy the situation somewhat, but, unfortunately, one was not close at hand. The lack of balance made forward progress impossible. Changing positions would not help due to the nature of the vehicle, and jumping up and down could lead to other problems. In order to make better use of the implement, the man would have to alter his position quite a bit, and he would either topple over or the whole thing would be reversed. Gazing downward at his bulky companion who seemed disinterested in his plight, the man decided the only remedy was to bring some other assistant the next time. The right kind of person would certainly eliminate the problem.

News Release

February 25, 1988

Teachers promote reading comprehension but student's reasoning skills remain week, Nation's Report Card finds.

(Princeton, NJ) -- American teachers are using a variety of effective instructional approaches before, during, and after reading to develop the comprehension skills of students in grades three, seven, and eleven, a new study from the Nation's Report Card said today.

But poor readers report that their teachers are more likely to use teaching techniques that emphasize basic reading skills rather than comprehension and critical thinking, said the new report, *Who Reads Best?*

Perhaps as a result, poor readers use a narrower range of strategies to guide their own reading, and the approaches reported by the poor readers in the 11th grade were remarkably similar to those reported by their third grade counterparts: sounding out the words in a passage and then asking for help.

"Teachers are using techniques such as previewing material and discussing new vocabulary before reading, providing lists of questions to guide students while they are reading, and working them afterward to pinpoint the main idea of the text," said Archie Lapointe, Executive Director of the Nation's Report Card, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

"Still, at the 11th grade level, the better readers are far more likely than the poor readers to be asked their opinions about a text and to support those opinions, and that's probably too bad," Lapointe said.

The less able readers (those with average performance in the bottom 25 percent of NAEP's proficiency scale) also reported doing less independent reading than good readers. But, in comparison with good readers (those with average performance in the upper 25 percent), poor readers seem to be even more limited in their school reading experiences than in the reading they do on their own.

This suggests that poor readers may be able to manage more varied reading experiences than are currently being provided by schools, said the report, which was co-authored by NAEP Deputy Director Ina V.S. Mullis and professors Arthur Applebee and Judith Langer of the State University of New York at Albany.

NAEP also found that students at all three grade levels still struggle with tasks that require them to interpret or defend what they have read. For example, on a task designed to assess students' ability to read and respond critically, only 19 percent of the third graders, 38 percent of the seventh graders, and 41 percent of the 11th graders produced satisfactory responses, said the report.

"Reading instruction at all levels must be restructured to ensure that students learn to reason more effectively about what they have read," the report said.

"When material is difficult for them, the best readers move beyond sounding out words or asking for help to rereading material and using its context," said Mullis. "The more proficient readers develop a repertoire of strategies that help them gain more effective control of the reading process, but the poor readers may have their old, less-effective strategies reinforced."

More than 35,000 students participated in the 1986 reading assessment conducted by NAEP, a 19 year-old project mandated by Congress, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, and currently administered by Educational Testing Service of Princeton, New Jersey.

Who Reads Best? provides NAEP's most detailed look ever at background factors linked to reading performance, Mullis said. In addition to the focus on comprehension strategies, the data illustrate the importance of such matters as parents' interest in their children's schoolwork, students' use of the library, and pursuit of frequent and varied reading activities, she said.

The 1986 reading assessment included a variety of source materials -- stories, poems, essays, tabular documents, and newspaper articles. Students responded to questions that required them to restructure and interpret what they read and to write out their own responses. They also answered multiple choice questions.

As in past NAEP studies, *Who Reads Best?* reports that on average, minority students and those from disadvantaged urban communities perform poorly relative to the national population at each grade level. For example, the average proficiency levels for these students in grade 11 was only slightly above the national average for students in the seventh grade. "The journey toward equal educational opportunity in the United States has been marked by steady progress, but it is by no means complete, "Lapointe said.

Who Reads Best? reports on reading results of various subgroups of students and relates their performance to a range of student background characteristics. It does not report trend information, the most recent of which can be found in NAEP's 1985 report, *The Reading Report Card*, 1971-84.

Trend information for the 1986 reading assessment is not available because of apparently anomalous results from the statistical analysis procedures. After rigorous scrutiny, NAEP staff and external experts determined that the reading test itself is valid, complete, and reliable. Therefore, Who Reads Best? reports on reading results of various subgroups of students and relates their performance to a range of student background characteristics. It does not report trend information, the most recent of which can be found in NAEP's 1985 report, *The Reading Report Card*, 1971-84.

The report, *Who Reads Best? Factors Related to Reading Achievement in Grades 3, 7, and 11*, is available for $12.50 from the Nation's Report Card, CN 6710, Princeton, NJ 08541-6710.

Highlights

This report synthesizes current research-based thinking about effective academic instruction for elementary schools serving high proportions of students from impoverished families. For years, the challenges of teaching reading, writing, and mathematics in such settings have prompted both researchers and practitioners to search for better curricula and instructional approaches.

Until recently, a "conventional wisdom" about effective practice in such settings has emphasized the remediation of learners' deficits, a curriculum broken down into discrete skills, teacher-directed instruction, a uniform approach to classroom management, and the grouping of students by ability. In the hands of skilled teachers, the conventional wisdom can work well, especially when the goal is improving student performance on relatively simple academic tasks. It has important limits, though, which are the subject of this report.

Alternatives to Conventional Wisdom

Recent scholarship, theory, and experimentation in the classroom highlight flaws in conventional wisdom and point to promising alternatives. We briefly summarize these alternatives below:

Conventional Wisdom	Alternatives to Conventional Wisdom
• An emphasis on learners' deficits — that is, what the "disadvantaged" student lacks in knowledge, intellectual facility, or experience	• An emphasis on the knowledge students *do* bring to school • Explicit teaching of how to function in the "culture" of the school
• Curriculum that teaches discrete skills in a fixed sequence from "basic" to "higher order" skills	• Early emphasis on appropriate "higher order" tasks • Extensive opportunities to learn and apply skills in context • An emphasis on meaning and understanding in all academic instruction
• Exclusive or heavy reliance on teacher-directed instruction	• A combination of teacher-directed and learner-directed instruction
• Classroom management principles uniformly applied across the school day so as to forestall disorder in the classroom	• Variation in classroom management approaches depending on the kind of academic work being done
• Long-term grouping of students by achievement or ability	• Some use of grouping arrangements that mix ability levels • More flexibility in grouping arrangements

The theme running through our critique is this: Although it represents an improvement over much of the instruction offered in schools serving poor children, conventional wisdom may place an unintended ceiling on student learning. Appropriately applied, the alternatives discussed in this report show promise of improving on conventional practice.

Emerging Standards of "Good Practice"

These alternatives to conventional practice are consistent with views of curriculum and instruction that have gained currency among experts in mathematics, reading, and writing. Emerging standard for these fields have the following emphases:

- *Mathematics*. More work on understanding and applications, with broader coverage of mathematics topics; less work on computation and less redundancy across grades.
- *Reading*. More reading for meaning from the earliest grades (and correspondingly less attention to discrete skills taught out of context); exposure to a wide variety of text, including material that connects with students' backgrounds and experiences.
- *Writing*. More meaningful written communication and less attention to mastery of writing "mechanics" in isolation; introduction to various genres and the processes of writing from the earliest years in school.

The Need for Further Experimentation with Alternatives

While there is research support for alternatives to conventional wisdom, there is much still to learn about the application of these ideas to the range of settings in which poor children learn. We offer these ideas in hopes that they will stimulate further experimentation and study.

Knapp, M.S. & Turnbull, B.J. (January 1990). "Study of Academic Instruction for Disadvantaged Students." Better schooling for the children of poverty: Alternatives to conventional wisdom. U.S. Department of Education.

Trends in American Reading Comprehension Instruction

In many respects, it is risky to declare trends in reading comprehension instruction across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Trends imply absolutes. Declaration of movement from one emphasis to another suggests that certain kinds of comprehension instruction occurred during particular periods, and only during those periods. In reality, such absolutes did not exist. Movements over time merely reflected changes in predominance or focus, with different emphases generally overlapping greatly. One of the most striking lessons we learned from our work was that for nearly every concept most educators would now consider utterly modern, there were early twentieth century predecessors. Yet as we developed this monograph, we became aware of changes in emphases. Here are the major shifts we discerned:

1. The most dramatic change occurred toward the beginning of the twentieth century--the instructional shift from using and improving oral reading as a means of affecting "meaning-getting" to a focus on comprehension during silent reading.

2. There was a movement from instruction involving external control over student comprehension to internal student control. This was reflected in a former emphasis on the use of instruments, worksheets and workbooks, kits, or other materials to a more recent interest in affecting readers' mental processes so they might gain self-control over their own reading comprehension strategies.

3. Instruction moved from drill on what of comprehension (e.g., using skills books to practice getting the main idea) to learning about the how and why of comprehension (e.g., learning how to make inferences while reading).

4. Formerly, instructional emphasis was placed on teaching the "subskills of comprehension" (e.g., learning about sequence in texts by practicing sequence exercises), whereas more recently, instruction has focused on holistic comprehension strategies (e.g., coping better with the idea in a given text through learning how to summarize).

5. Instruction seems to be moving from little direct teaching to specific and direct teaching followed by supervised and independent practice.

continued...

Overall, these patterns appear to reflect:

(1) an evolving view of comprehension as a holistic and unitary process affected by the teacher, the learner, the context, the purposes for reading, and the materials to be read;

(2) an increased concern over the years for the mental processes involved in comprehension and the extent to which such processes can be strengthened -- a concern that in all likelihood also reflects the trend in psychology away from behaviorism and toward cognition;

(3) an increased recognition of the role teachers may play in the advancement of their students' reading comprehension; and

(4) an increased recognition of the extent to which students can direct their own learning.

FROM: Fitzgerald, J. *Reading Comprehension Instruction 1783-1987: A Review of Trends and Research.* (pp 90-91). Newark, DE: International Reading Association, 1990.

The Need for a Vision

When we say that someone has "vision," we generally mean two things. We mean that the person has the ability to see what is possible to achieve or accomplish, given the strongest concerted effort. We also mean that the person has the ability to see how all the parts of a complex operation can fit together and work together dynamically. We generally speak of leaders having vision, but specialists need vision, too. A maker of custom cabinets with vision will design them so that they are more useful and attractive than ordinary cabinets would be because he will anticipate how the customer can use them and how they can fit into their location. A person who does reading comprehension instructional research (*Ed. note*...or a person who teaches reading comprehension) will be of more value to our field if the researcher (or teacher) has a vision of what is being researched (or taught) as well as how the instruction being researched can fit and work together with the other parts of a possible "best" program to improve reading-comprehension ability or comprehension and learning from text. We believe that those who conduct the more important reading-comprehension instructional research will invariably have such a vision.

A vision of readers. There are various ways we might develop a vision of readers and their characteristics. For example, we might take a schema-theoretic view and adopt goals for readers which emphasize the role of a reader's background knowledge as well as the strategies used to refine or negotiate meaning. We might take the view offered by some developmental psychologists that successful readers have or need metacognitive control and awarenesses. Accordingly, we might adopt goals which emphasize the readers' ability to determine what they are trying to do and how they might go about doing it. In contrast to either a schema-theoretic or developmental position, we might take the view that reading is an interpersonal experience either between readers and authors, involving different types of collaboration between the two, or between readers and "the world of the text." Consequently, we might emphasize a sense of readership, authorship, different modes of criticism and the vicarious nature of a reader's experience. Alternatively, we might adopt a more functional view of readers and develop goals based upon literacy demands across school, home, and

the workplace. There are countless views which might be held, and one must recognize the potential that each alternative offers. They can force us to rethink just what our goals for readers have been and should be. They might prompt us to invest our energies in research on other strategies and concerns and, thus, extend our reading-comprehension research and practices beyond the categories into which most studies to date can be so easily arranged.

A vision of learning groups. As we consider the individual reader, we should not forget that learning is a social event usually occurring among individuals within a learning community, whether that group be a classroom, reading group, or a network of independent workers. The nature of this community cannot be disregarded. Indeed, the characteristics of one's community interface with and affect the goals being pursued for individual students or research subjects. For example, our vision of possible optional learning groups might consider the group's metacognitive abilities (recognizing the group's goals and different strategies for achieving such goals), the group's independence (self-initiating goals or procedures for the accomplishment of such pursuits), the nature of the group's participation (teacher dependence or teacher independence; haphazard or rule governed) and the quality of the group's learning experiences (interpersonal, critical, ideational, aesthetic). Obviously, intertwined with such visions or goals for groups is a sense of the teacher's role.

UNDERSTANDING COMPREHENSION

The Creation of Meaning

Beverly P. Farr and Darryl J. Strickler
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Although comprehension has been defined, debated, investigated, evaluated, and taught in a multitude of ways, a widely accepted theory or model of comprehension has not yet emerged. This fact is not surprising since comprehension is a complex, covert process that depends on a myriad of internal and external factors, many of which are unique to each individual.

Comprehension is a vital element in reading; without it, reading has not occurred. Although a variety of so-called reading "habits" or "skills" or "strategies" can be assessed which may give clues to a person's ability or inability to read, in the final analysis, the evaluation of comprehension ability provides the most viable information about the ability to read. If we are seeking a better understanding of the reading process so that we can "teach" reading better, we need to begin by increasing our understanding of comprehension.

In recent years, many reading researchers have drawn upon work in related fields, such as psychology and sociology, to gain a more substantial foundation for studying comprehension. Concurrently, researchers in related fields have been taking a closer look at the reading process in order to gain insight into cognition and language processing, in general. Supported by research funds in some cases, researchers are putting much more energy into the investigation of comprehension. The focus of attention, of research efforts, and of broad commentary, has shifted more and more to comprehension.

Although the purpose of this paper is not to present an all-new "Definitive Model of Reading Comprehension," we feel it would be helpful to review some traditional approaches to comprehension and some of the problems associated with these approaches. At the same time, we feel it would be useful to consider some of the more recent work on comprehension and tentative implications of such work for reading instruction. From what we have learned about comprehension, we know that the readers of this article will "create" their own meaning, make their own inferences, and draw their own conclusions. We will, however, present our own interpretations of this information, as well as make suggestions for the classroom—approaches, strategies, techniques which we feel will enhance the development of children's ability to comprehend what they read.

COMPREHENSION—LOOKING BACK

Limitations of the "Skills Model"
Describing comprehension has been a relatively popular pursuit over the years. In some cases, "models" have been used to assist in conceptualizing the comprehension process. Most commonly, a "skills model" has been used to define comprehension. Skills models of reading frequently include such skills as: "getting a directly-stated detail", "getting the main idea", "following a sequence of events", "reading to locate information", "reading for detailed remembering", "getting an implied meaning"... Instructional materials based on a skills model of comprehension typically include such questions as:

1. Select the best title for the selection: (1) Down and Out, (2) A Likely Story, (3) Bill's Dilemma.
2. What did Uncle Joe mean when he said, "I'm fit as a fiddle!"?

Farr, B. P. & Strickler, D. J. (1980). Reading comprehension: Resource Guide. Bloomington: Indiana University Printing.

3. Was Bill wise or unwise in remaining on the river bank? Why or why not?
4. Place these events in the order in which they happened: (1) Mary knocked on the door. (2) Mary became frightened. (3) Mary ran up the steps.
5. Look in the chapter to determine the year in which the battle occurred.

In the skills approach, comprehension is subdivided into a multitude of arbitrary skills presented in a hierarchy which usually resembles Bloom's Taxonomy. Although there is little research to support such as a conceptualization of reading comprehension, it is, nonetheless, an approach that has been (and is currently) widely used in basal readers, workbooks, education textbooks, and many tests. Factor analysis studies conducted by Davis (1968, 1972) and others, in fact, revealed that a very limited number of separate, identifiable skills could be considered as ones underpinning comprehension. With no more evidence than we have now, we cannot state that the skills approach has had significant negative effects on the development of comprehension. It is apparent, however, that several common classroom practices that have resulted from this conceptualization of reading are not conducive to the development of more profitable comprehension strategies. These include:

1. The acceptance of a hierarchy as absolute and inflexible. Many teachers approach the teaching of comprehension as a step-by-step procedure where a subsequent skill cannot be introduced until the preceding one has been mastered. Many have also assumed that primary grade children or children in upper grades who are having problems with reading cannot handle the so-called "higher-level" comprehension skills.

2. The over-emphasis in basal readers, workbooks, tests, and in the classroom on literal recall skills. Somehow, instruction only rarely progresses beyond this level. The implication seems to be that recalling factual details is most important, while research has shown that such information is most readily and rapidly lost from memory (Bartlett, 1932).

3. The evaluation of separate comprehension skills by limited test items which results in a spurious profile of students' comprehension ability (e.g., "Jimmy has good literal recall, but can't identify main ideas or draw conclusions.")

Thus, although the skills approach appears outwardly to have made it "easier" to teach comprehension, it seems likely that it has merely succeeded in limiting comprehension potential—limiting how teachers interact with students about what they have read, limiting how students approach materials, and limiting what any individual gains from reading.

The Problem of Measuring Comprehension

Since comprehension is not an observable behavior, measuring or evaluating comprehension has posed significant problems for educators. Comprehension measures that have been devised allow us only to infer that comprehension has occurred. So much attention has been focused on the measurement of comprehension that it is not unreasonable to suggest that questioning and comprehension have been equated. In most cases, these questions have been of the "literal recall" variety, and successful responses to these questions have been taken as clear evidence that comprehension has occurred. This is not necessarily a valid conclusion since the ability to answer literal recall questions can depend as much on prior knowledge as on one's ability to manipulate language.

This myopic approach to assessing comprehension—the almost exclusive use of literal recall questions—is only one of the many problems that have attended the evaluation of comprehension. The subdivision or application of a hierarchy of comprehension skills has promoted misconceptions about reading. The use of separate items to measure comprehension subskills has resulted in spurious conclusions with regard to a student's comprehension ability, e.g., "Jeanny can identify the main idea, but she needs to work on drawing conclusions."

At times, the problem is that there is a mismatch between the testing objectives and the teaching objectives. A reading subtest may be labelled "Comprehension," but it may assess comprehension in a manner significantly different from the approach commonly used by the teacher in the classroom.

Other factors influencing the evaluation of comprehension that have severely complicated the issue include the length and content of passages

used, the language structure of the passages, the purposes given for reading, the amount of time given for completion, and the prior knowledge of the examinee. This last consideration was the focal point of a number of important studies that investigated the "passage dependency" of questions on standardized reading tests (Tuinman, 1972, 1974: Allington, et.al., 1977). These studies found that many questions on a comprehension subtest could be answered without reading the passages. As a result, passage dependency is now given greater consideration in the development of comprehension tests.

The use of the cloze procedure, both for teaching and testing comprehension, has been receiving more and more attention in the literature and in educational materials. Research (Rankin, 1965; Bormuth, 1969) indicates that it correlates well with other measures of comprehension. Therefore, the use of the cloze procedure is recommended on the basis that it is easier to devise since it involves simply deleting every "nth" word from a selected passage. The cloze procedure is considered by many to be a powerful tool to evaluate comprehension since it is sensitive to both syntactic and semantic constraints, but more research is needed to explore these constraints, as well as the problems that also beleaguer other approaches to the measurement of comprehension—the effect of content and prior knowledge of the reader.

COMPREHENSION—WHAT WE NOW KNOW

The upsurge of interest in reading comprehension has been so dramatic in recent years, that it is difficult to review pertinent information from related disciplines, analyze it for commonalities and interrelationships, and make generalizations or draw any conclusions. Current references by educators to relevant information from the disciplines of psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and cognitive psychology do not seem to be amenable to any language of coherence. Researchers in the related disciplines are either looking at language processing in very general terms or are analyzing small bits and pieces, or they are only beginning to consider certain aspects of language. Psycholinguists, for example, spent a considerable amount of time investigating the psychological reality of various linguistic units and the processing of these units and, only recently, have begun to consider the role of semantics.

It is not our intention to attempt to review in its entirety the recent research on comprehension. Rather, we would like to delineate a number of concepts that either have emerged from the research as ones that should have some impact on our understanding of comprehension or are being explored to determine their relevance.

Psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic research on the development of language in young children has resulted in the drawing of parallels to the development of reading ability. Several points stand out as ones that deserve attention:

Language Base for Reading

1. Upon entering school, most children have mastered a very complex set of rules which govern language. They are virtually in command of the phonology, morphology, and syntax of the language and are able to utilize a wide variety of semantic elements. What seems most amazing is that they have accomplished this feat merely by being exposed to meaningful language in a total context. Language always has a purpose, and, through it, young children learn how "to mean" (Halliday, 1975). It is important, too, that children have developed certain risk-taking behaviors, in that they have had to be wrong many times in order to arrive at the correct usage.
2. Young children learn to understand the various functions that language can serve. They know they can designate things, interact with others, ask questions, give directions, control the behavior of others, and convey information about themselves. They have already begun to realize that these same functions are served by written materials.
3. Since most pre-school-age children are surrounded by print in the wide variety of contexts, they become aware that print conveys a message, that it has a purpose, and that the context is, in essence, "the meaning."

Although it has always been known that there are certain prerequisites for comprehension, attempts are being made by researchers to specify and clarify these prerequisites. Such information would certainly contribute to the improvement of instruction in comprehension.

Prerequisites for Comprehension

4. It seems obvious that in order to read effectively, a person must have a good notion of what reading is all about. There is mounting evidence that some children (and older persons) with reading problems have a misconception about reading, i.e., they see it as a process of "saying words," rather than of "getting meaning." Based on interviews using her Reading Interview, Carolyn Burke speculates that it may be possible to determine from interviewees' responses the "model of reading" with which a person is operating and, perhaps, to identify how this model is interfering with or aiding the development of effective comprehending strategies.

5. In order to comprehend, a person must have some prior knowledge of (or familiarity with) the language structure, concepts, and situational contexts presented in the written material. Bransford and Johnson (1972) found that the comprehender imposes a context which depicts the relationships among the elements in a passage. If the passage does not provide sufficient cues, he is placed in a problem-solving situation in which he must attempt to find a suitable organization of his previous knowledge.

6. It is generally agreed by researchers in various disciplines that to be an efficient reader, a person must have available certain processing strategies. He must be able to form and test hypotheses, make predictions and inferences, and integrate and interrelate elements and concepts. Some researchers posit that processing is going on at various levels simultaneously and that the process is "synergistic," i.e., various elements or processes cooperate in such a way that the total effect is greater than the sum of the effects taken independently. Processing strategies are currently the subject of many research investigations.

The dilemma over what the "unit of meaning" is has confounded researchers for some time and is still under consideration. For the most part, attention has moved away from linguistic structures, such as the word and sentence, morpheme and deep structure, and has been focused on larger units, such as the paragraph, and on the semantic structure of larger units. Such concepts as "propositions" and "story grammar" now dominate the research literature. Relevant points to consider in this area include the following:

Unit of Meaning

7. Meanings for words in context are not assigned by selecting from a collection of stored meanings, but by calculating the meaning in light of the given context and in terms of one's experiential background and store of knowledge.

8. Comprehension has a broader base than the interpretation of the deep structure of a sentence. Sentences can be seen as "sources" of information, rather than as objects of storage. Indeed, comprehension should be viewed as "the construction of meaning," rather than as an interpretive process.

Of particular interest in the exploration of processing strategies is the role of prediction, or expectations, the process of making inferences, and the effect of integrating elements. A better understanding of these strategies would certainly seem to have the potential of improving reading instruction through an improved understanding of the reading process.

Processing Strategies

9. Prediction is essential in reading. In order to read efficiently, the reader must be predicting—predicting what something is about based on the title, pictures, headings; predicting what the next word is based on syntactic and semantic information; predicting what the outcome will be. Instructional techniques, such as the cloze procedure or the use of predictable books are based on this concept, which has been a frequent topic in recent professional journals and books.

10. Inferencing is considered by many to be an integral part of comprehension. The inferencing process is automatically activated when a person reads, not just when a so-called "inference question" is asked in an

instructional setting. The reader spontaneously makes assumptions about the content. These assumptions became part of the information stored from processing written material. Bransford, Barclay, and Franks (1972) found that when subjects were asked to indicate what sentences they heard during an experiment in which sentences were read to them, they were unable to differentiate the information generated from assumptions they had made about the content from the actual content they had heard.

11. Readers seem to integrate information contained in a series of sentences to form a broad description of a situation. Bransford, et al., (1972) found that language users integrate information in such a way that they cannot distinguish what they heard from what they did not hear.

Factors which influence comprehension—factors inherent in the material and factors inherent in the reader—constitute another area of considerable research and discussion. Such factors are difficult to identify, to evaluate, and to control.

Factors Influencing Comprehension

13. The factor within the reader which is complementary to the preceding one is the effect of reader interest or prior knowledge. A significant amount of research time has been devoted to these factors. Certainly, it is not difficult to accept (and the research supports) the fact that the more a reader is interested in, or familiar with, some material, the more he understands. Simply stated, reading material is more predictable and more motivational to people who are interested in what they are reading.

14. Readers' expectations determine what they gain from what they read. This concept has been explored in studies in cognitive psychology dealing with the effect of high-level schemata on a reader's interaction with print. Anderson, et al. (1977) suggest that "the principal determinant of the knowledge a person can acquire from reading is the knowledge (s)he already possesses." In a study in which an ambiguous passage was presented to students with unique backgrounds, the researchers found that students gave one distinct interpretation or another to the passage and reported being unaware of other perspectives. It is clear that expectations are based on the reader's background of experience. The reader selects those aspects which (s)he considers relevant and these determine the meanings which (s)he will construct.

Above all, a reader should expect what (s)he is reading to make sense. Some researchers have pointed out that one of the most noticeable characteristics of the reading of poor readers is that they read as if they do *not* expect what they are reading to make sense. Evidence indicates that this lack of expectation for meaningfulness results from the instructional procedures to which the student has been exposed. The naturalness or artificiality of the reading situation, whether the students set their own purposes for reading or what purposes they are given, the processing unit which serves as the focal point of instruction, and the types of questions asked, are some of the instructional constraints that are part of the print setting and work directly to fix the boundaries of comprehension.

To summarize the current work on comprehension in some coherent fashion and to lend more clarity to the discussion above, let us reiterate what we feel are the salient points:

Children apply the vast amount of knowledge they have about language structures and language functions to the process of learning to read. Written language awareness which they have gained before entering school contributes to their understanding of the purpose of reading.

Understanding the purpose of reading, i.e., obtaining meaning; applying background knowledge of language structure, concepts, and life experiences; and bringing to bear information-processing strategies are prerequisites for comprehension.

The unit of meaning for comprehension is larger than individual words or sentences. The child must learn to select the most productive cues and construct meaning for the material read.

Certain processing strategies—predicting, inferencing, integrating—are critical components of comprehension.

Factors which significantly influence comprehension and must be taken into account include: content, interest, prior knowledge, purpose, expectations, and print setting.

With this summary, we can now turn our attention to a question many teachers often ask: "Great—now that I know all this, what can I do with it?"

TEACHING COMPREHENSION—WHAT DO I DO ON MONDAY?

The day-to-day challenge of meeting the needs of children and maintaining an atmosphere which is satisfying to students and teacher alike, as well as conducive to learning is a demanding task, one that requires the unrelenting dedication and creative talents of the teacher. We have interpreted the information above in order to formulate the following concrete suggestions for the teaching of comprehension. These recommendations apply at all grade levels, although some will receive greater emphasis at some levels than at others. We have organized these recommendations in general categories to make them more useful.

CONSIDER THE ECOLOGY OF LEARNING

Although our recommendations in this category relate to any learning situation, we feel that they are essential in the classroom and we consider them prerequisite for a comprehension-centered classroom.

Make it acceptable to take risks. Young children have mastered language through a complex process of trial-and-error. In fact, they have had to be wrong many times in order to learn the right responses. More importantly, they are not usually penalized for being wrong when learning to use oral language. This atmosphere, which was pervasive in their homes, should be carried over to the classroom. Teachers should: emphasize questions that have more than one correct answer: reinforce attempts to find an answer by crediting any part that is right; solicit reasons for responses that are incorrect; allow students to see that their teacher can be wrong or that teachers don't always know the answer—let them prove you wrong or find the information you need.

Promote curiosity. Students need to learn that curiosity is valued. Provide a wide variety of resources for them and design situations which stimulate investigation, the exploration of a topic, or the development of a project. But don't think only in terms of large undertakings—promote curiosity as much as possible in all classroom activities.

Model appropriate behaviors. Let students catch you reading a book. Discuss things you are reading with them. Show them how to take risks. Read to them and let them see that you sometimes make miscues, too. Provide evidence of your healthy curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for reading.

BUILD A LANGUAGE BASE FOR READING

Provide many opportunities for language enrichment. Although children entering school have mastered the basic structures of language and have developed control of language for different purposes, their understanding of language functions and of the semantic system continue to develop for a long period of time. As stated by sociolinguists, language is a tool that can perform certain tasks. Speaking, listening, reading, and writing are channels through which these functions are put to work. Helping children to perceive the usefulness of language should be a primary goal of the classroom teacher. Design specific situations to promote the development of language functions—the use of language to request, interact, express individuality, imagine, convey information, describe, report, persuade, and wonder. (See Page & Pinnell, *Teaching Reading Comprehension* for elaboration on the development of language functions).

Build on what they know. Learning takes place much more easily when children are given the opportunity to use what they already know as a foundation. Use written language from their environment (signs, labels. . .) as initial language experiences. Take pictures of signs in the school or in the neighborhood. Make scrapbooks or collages of labels, packages. This procedure works well with older students (words from magazines, record jackets) and adults as well.

Use rhymes, riddles, poems, jumprope jingles, and songs as reading materials. Use the words from songs they know or teach them a song and then present them with a copy of the words to "read."

Use a language experience approach when writing down information which is part of an interesting experience (children either dictate or write themselves). Children use their own words to report, describe, give directions, or remind themselves about aspects of the experience.

Develop children's knowledge of a topic prior to the actual reading, i.e., help them to deal with new

concepts by giving them a common language to discuss them. This does not mean merely going over the new "hard" words, but setting up concrete experiences where they deal with the concepts in a variety of ways and *use* the related vocabulary in meaningful ways.

Use predictable books (books which use cumulative or repetitive patterns or sentence patterns which are easy to predict) to capitalize on the child's knowledge of syntax and semantics.

Reading *to* children often is also a very important means of establishing a language base because it helps them become familiar with the special "language" of books and to develop a "sense of story." This is as true for older students as for the younger ones.

DEVELOP MEANINGFUL SITUATIONS FOR READING

Design problems for which reading and writing can aid in the solution. Page and Pinnell (1979, p. 71) point out: "Helping children see that reading and writing serve important functions and can be used in meaningful ways as tools to solve problems may be the most significant endeavor of the classroom teacher."

Assign tasks which have "real-life" purposes. Many classroom exercises are strictly for the teacher—book reports, compositions, or chapter tests. Design tasks which have application beyond the usual classroom exercise, which simulate real-life situations, and which occasionally are directed to an audience other then the teacher. It's the difference between having students write book reports and having them write "book blurbs" to be kept in the library for use by faculty and other students or have them write a character sketch as it might appear in *Who's Who.**

Help students use oral reading in meaningful ways. Oral reading seems to be over-emphasized in the classroom, usually for one purpose—to satisfy the teacher. Provide opportunities for them to read to others for the purposes of entertaining or informing—reading to younger children, reading poetry, reader's theater, etc. Preparation should be encouraged as a necessary component of the exercise.

**Credit for this suggestion must be given to William Page and Arthur Daigon whose explication of rhetorically based and rhetorically deficient tasks served as the basis for this recommendation.*

PROMOTE FLEXIBILITY IN READING

As stated earlier, comprehension is a complex process that is influenced by many factors. One way to help ensure the development of positive comprehension strategies is to give students a variety of opportunities to practice those strategies.

Make available various types of reading material. Include all types of material in your reading program—children's books, informational pieces, non-fiction material, magazines, pamphlets, catalogs, directions, cookbooks, newspapers.

Vary the purpose for reading. Many students develop the idea that the purpose for reading is usually to answer the teacher's questions afterwards. The focus, attention, and depth of a person's reading depends on the purpose for reading the material. Make sure that students develop various strategies for approaching materials by helping them discover many different purposes for reading (and by sometimes allowing them to set their own purposes). This strategy can help strengthen their ability to skim, read directions, summarize, determine implications, etc.

Alter the print setting frequently. Constraints on the reading situation in school also determine the degree of comprehension as well as concepts about the process and general attitudes toward reading. Reading should not *only* take place in reading groups, in front of a feedback machine, or behind a Controlled Reader; it should not *always* be evaluated in terms of oral performance, responses to literal recall questions, or how many workbook pages are completed satisfactorily; students should not *routinely* have to write a book report, read when their turn comes up in reading group, or read all the stories in a basal in sequence. When such procedures are invariable, children develop better expectations for reading instruction than for reading itself. On the other hand, when they are given many different types of material to read for many different purposes, they become effective "comprehenders" who usually view reading more positively.

Make reading and learning to read easy and enjoyable. We admit that this is a catch-all category for some additional suggestions we think are important in order to avoid problems and

promote positive attitudes toward reading. As mentioned before, predictable books, familiar materials, or the language experience approach should be used to help students learn to read, to practice skills or strategies essential to reading without overburdening them with the content. The information children bring to print should be built upon so the task of reading is facilitated. Allow students to practice reading in materials of their choice. Just as it is important for a piano student to practice easy pieces in order to develop fingering skills, so it is with the reader. A child will continue to read and re-read a book only as long as he is learning from it.

Give students opportunities to read—just to read. Many teachers have successfully used the SSR (Sustained Silent Reading) approach where everyone (including the teacher) reads something of his/her choice on a regular basis for a certain period of time. They may or may not choose to do something as a result of their reading.

Avoid, at all costs, avoid, avoid word-focused instruction. Children learn words best in context, in the natural process of reading. The meaning of a word is not determined by selecting from a list of stored definitions, but in light of its context, and applying cognitive strategies to figure out a word helps children retain them.

Finally, become familiar with the vast array of wonderful children's books (and books for adolescents) and make them available, "sell" them, stimulate children to want to listen to them and to read them. There is hardly a child anywhere who can't be "turned on" to reading many of these books.

ENCOURAGE INTERACTION WITH MATERIAL

One of the primary differences between oral and written interactions is that the written form doesn't usually allow a direct interaction with the author. It's important for students to verbalize their reactions or interpretations and to encounter other reactions as well.

Provide many opportunities for thinking. Help students to go beyond the material, discuss their reflections on what they have read, compare their reactions with those of others. Encourage students to discuss similarities and differences in materials as well as applications to their own lives.

Use specific strategies for helping students develop concepts through reading. The following suggestions have been gathered from sources on teaching reading comprehension. We consider them to be excellent ones for developing concepts. The first three are from Dorothy Watson (See her videotape presentation, "Strategies for a Comprehension-Centered Reading Program," 1980), and the second two are from P. David Pearson and Dale Johnson (*Teaching Reading Comprehension*, 1977).

1. "Selected Deletion"—Promote risk-taking behaviors by eliminating certain words from a text (even by placing a finger over the word when the student is reading orally) and asking the student to supply an appropriate word.
2. "Developing sense of story"—Using stories or informational pieces with easily identifiable parts, cut them into sections and help students to reconstruct the material and discuss reasons for predictions, selections.
3. "Concept-building"—Help students gather information from the author, monitor information based on background information, relate new to old information.
4. "Concept-stretching"—Capitalize on any and all opportunities (even a workbook page on phonics) to develop skill in identifying attributes of concepts and classify and relate concepts to each other.
5. "Previewing"—Establish and review what is *known* about a topic in order to relate new information to information students already have.

Diversify reading follow-up activities. Students often develop the expectation that after reading some assigned material, they will inevitably have to answer several questions presented orally by the teacher or in the workbook—questions which most commonly test their memory for specific details. To become an efficient, versatile reader, it's important that children have opportunities to deal with material in many ways. Engage students in discussion after reading. This substitutes for the direct interaction between sender and receiver usually absent from reading. Students can also engage in "ask the author" activities after reading stories or books written by fellow classmates.

If you feel compelled to ask students questions about what they have read, it is a good idea to vary the types of questions used. Include many socalled "higher-level" questions, questions which require students to read critically, evaluate, interpret, make judgments. A very effective approach is to allow the students themselves to formulate questions. Have them present them to other students or to the teacher.

Use retelling as a follow-up activity. Asking students to summarize what they have read enables you to assess their recall, organizational ability, knowledge of sequence, and understanding of the theme.

Other follow-up activities include:
Cloze passages
Reacting to important, exciting or frightening parts of stories
Reading a similar book to compare, contrast
Responding to characters, setting
Art projects—drawings, models, abstract representations, etc.
Creative writing
Letters to characters, author

CONCLUSION

As a result of reviewing selected studies in the area of reading comprehension in order to characterize the differential strategies that skilled and less skilled comprehenders use, Roberta Golinkoff (1975-76) summarized her findings as follows: "Good comprehenders are adaptable and flexible in their pattern of reading; they will vary their eye movements, shift the size of their processing unit, and efficiently use supplementary contextual information. . .in the most economical way possible given the task at hand. The poor comprehender seems to read text in a word-by-word manner, with a minimum of text organization. The poor comprehender is also generally inflexible to variations in task demands and seems to use a minimum sized unit. This will make poor comprehenders. . . sound as though they are reading a grocery list during oral reading."

It seems obvious that the skills which Golinkoff identifies as ones characteristic of the good comprehender are not ones that can be taught directly. Rather, the good reader is someone who has been placed in situations which permitted him to figure out that reading is first and foremost a meaning-getting process; someone who has been allowed to take risks and continues to do so; someone who makes predictions; someone who has developed a variety of purposes for reading.

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Instructional Strategies in Reading Comprehension

Before	During	After
Previewing	Reciprocal Teaching	QAR
PReP	Think-Along	Story Structure
Set Purpose	ReQuest/InQuest	Paraphrasing
Develop prior knowledge	Cloze	Study guides
Predicting Activities	Strategy lessons	Retelling
Brainstorming	Visualizing	Written responses
VLP (Vocabulary/Language/Prediction)	Predictable books	Story maps
Review background material	Paired reading	Multimedia responses

Before, During and after...

Semantic Maps
DRTA
KWL
Questioning
Modeling
Training in self-monitoring

Previewing Techniques

Previewing

In essence, previewing techniques serve the function of establishing what is *known* in anticipation of learning what is *new* in the text. Previewing can help students avoid what we call the Charlie Brown syndrome. Recall what Charlie Brown does whenever he gets a new book. Before he even looks at the book, he counts the pages (625 pages! I'll never learn all that!). He is defeated before he starts, before he has had a chance to realize that he does not have to learn *all* that. It is not *all* new. He already knows something about it. He has not given himself the chance to learn what he already knows about what he is supposed to know.

Approach from the Known

We fear that all too many students approach school subjects with the Charlie Brown syndrome. They start out believing, "It's all Greek to me!" That is not true! Chances are pretty good that they already know something about most topics they encounter in school. They just do not realize it. Indeed, one of the teacher's most important tasks is to help students make the connection between what they already know and what they need to know. Put another way, comprehension is facilitated when we approach what is new from what is already known.

Help before Reading

Help, given before reading a selection is read, may elicit more and better reasoning from a wider range of students than help given after. Students approach a prereading task with a different attitude. After all, they have not yet read the selection. How can anyone expect them to know the "right" answers? It is a situation in which, because of ignorance, "your guess is as good as mine." In contrast, after they have read the selection they *are* supposed to know the answers. And if they are not sure, they are reluctant to speculate.

Summary

In summary, it has been shown that the disadvantages that stem from these techniques are more than offset by the advantages that are derived from the motivational value of students setting their own goals, the linkages between the new and the known, and the relatively anxiety-free atmosphere.

Many researchers and educators have used previewing as an effective technique. Graves, Prenn, and Cooke (1985) tested a specific procedure in which students listened to a lengthy preview of an assigned text. The preview was prepared by the teacher and its purpose was to motivate students. It had three parts:

(1) the activation of prior personal experiences that were relevant to the text;
(2) the building of necessary background knowledge for the text; and
(3) the establishment of an organizational framework for the text that was consistent with the framework the author used to present information.

Students who listened to the previews before reading the text significantly outperformed students who did not have previews on multiple measures of comprehension.

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Pearson, D.P., and Johnson, D.D. Teaching Reading Comprehension. (pp. 191-194). New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1978.

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PReP

The PreReadingPlan

Definition

The *Pre Reading Plan* is a three step instructional/assessment paradigm for teachers to use before assigning textbook reading to their classes. It facilitates the conscious accessing of knowledge related to major concepts presented in a text, by giving the readers the opportunity to access prior knowledge and to elaborate and evaluate accessed ideas. The assessment aspect of the procedure assists the teacher in:

(1) determining the prior knowledge a student possesses about a specific topic, as well as the manner in which this knowledge is organized;
(2) becoming aware of the language a student uses to express knowledge about a given topic; and
(3) making judgements about how much additional background information must be taught before the student can successfully read the text.

The instructional aspect of the procedure reminds students of what they already know about a topic; elicits group elaboration of existing language and concepts; and refines anticipations, in turn facilitating learning from text.

Group Discussion

The PReP calls for a group discussion before students read the text. The teacher must review the portion of text to be assigned to select a word, phrase, or picture to stimulate group discussion about a key concept in the text. In a brief introduction , the teacher puts the pre-reading activity in context by introducing the topic to be studied. There are three phases to the PReP.

1. **Initial Associations with the Concept**
   In this first phase the teacher says: "Tell anything that comes to mind when... (you hear this word, see this picture, etc.)." As each student freely associates and tells what ideas initially came to mind, the teacher writes these responses on the board. During this phase, students have their first opportunity to make associations between the key concept and what they already know.

2. **Reflections on Initial Associations**
   During the second phase, the students are asked, "What made you think of... (the response given by each of the students during phase 1)?" This phase encourages students to become aware of the associations they have made, to listen to each other's responses, and to become aware of their changing ideas. Through this procedure they gain the insight which permits them to evaluate the utility of these ideas in the reading experience.

3. **Reformulation of Knowledge**
   After each student has had an opportunity to think and tell about what triggered their ideas, the teacher asks, "Based on our discussion, have you any new ideas about... (the word, the picture, etc.)?" This phase allows students to tell about associations which have been elaborated or changed as a result of the discussion. Because they have had a chance to probe their memories and evaluate their ideas in terms of the text, they will read and reformulate their ideas in light of the reading task. The responses elicited during phase 3 are often more refined than those elicited during phase 1.

This three-phase lesson helps teachers and students assess what students already know about a concept and permits students to refine anticipations about the concepts to be read in the text. Students are encouraged to probe for as many links as possible about a given idea, and to formulate additional links in the group discussion. It is particularly important that the teacher not impede students in accessing ideas which may be in the students' concept structure but not in the teacher's. Phases 1 and 3 elicit "free association" responses, whereas phase 2 elicits metacognitive explanation.

Levels of Response

There seem to be three levels of verbalization during phase 1 and phase 3, based on the amount and organization of student's prior knowledge. Categorization of knowledge into levels (described in Figure 1) provides teachers with diagnostic information in planning for instruction. Previous studies have shown these levels to be more important than IQ or standardized reading test scores in predicting student recall of a particular passage (Langer, 1980; Langer & Nicolich, 1981).

If the student has much prior knowledge about the concept being discussed, responses to "Tell me anything that comes to mind when..." generally take the form of superordinate concepts, definitions, analogies, or a linking of that concept with another concept to show evidence of high-level integration of ideas.

If the student has some knowledge about the concept being discussed, responses generally take the form of examples, attributes, or defining characteristics. If the student has little prior information about the concept, responses generally focus on low level associations with morphemes (prefixes, suffixes, or root words), words which sound like the stimulus word, or first hand (but not quite relevant) experiences. (A more complete description of the levels or organization of knowledge can be found in Langer, 1981).

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RECIPROCAL TEACHING

developed by Annemarie Palincsar & Ann Brown

Definition

Reciprocal teaching is an instructional activity that takes place in the form of a dialogue between teachers and students regarding segments of text. The dialogue is structured by the use of four strategies: *summarizing, question generating, clarifying,* and *predicting*. The teacher and students take turns assuming the role of teacher in leading this dialogue.

Strategies

Summarizing provides the opportunity to identify and integrate the most important information in the text. Text can be summarized across sentences, across paragraphs, and across the passage as a whole. When students first begin the reciprocal teaching procedure, their efforts are generally focused at the sentence and paragraph levels. As they become more proficient, they are able to integrate at the paragraph and passage levels.

Question generating reinforces the summarizing strategy and carries the learner one more step along in the comprehension activity. When students generate questions, they first identify the kind of information that is significant enough to provide the substance for a question. They then pose this information in question form and self-test to ascertain that they can indeed answer their own question. Question generating is a flexible strategy to the extent that students can be taught and encouraged to generate questions at many levels.

Clarifying is an activity that is particularly important when working with students who have a history of comprehension difficulty. These students may believe that the purpose of reading is saying the words correctly; they may not be particularly uncomfortable that the words, and in fact the passage, are not making sense. When the students are asked to clarify, their attention is called to the fact that there may be many reasons why text is difficult to understand (e.g., new vocabulary, unclear referent words, and unfamiliar and perhaps difficult concepts). They are taught to be alert to the effects of such impediments to comprehension and to take the necessary measures to restore meaning (e.g., reread, ask for help).

Predicting occurs when students hypothesize what the author will discuss next in the text. In order to do this successfully, students must activate the relevant background knowledge that they already possess regarding the topic. The students have a purpose for reading: to confirm or disprove their hypotheses. Furthermore, the opportunity has been created for the students to link the new knowledge they will encounter in the text with the knowledge they already possess. The predicting strategy also facilitates use of text structure as students learn that headings, subheadings, and questions embedded in the text are useful means of anticipating what might occur next.

In summary, each of these strategies was selected as a means of aiding students to construct meaning from text as well as a means of monitoring their reading to ensure that they are in fact understanding what they read.

Initiation

Reciprocal teaching should be introduced to students with some discussion regarding the many reasons why text may be difficult to understand, why it is important to have a strategic approach to reading and studying, and how the reciprocal teaching procedure will help the students understand and monitor their understanding as they read.

The students are then given an overall description of the procedure, emphasizing that it takes the form of a dialogue or discussion about the text and that everyone takes a turn assuming the role of teacher in this discussion. To illustrate, the person who is assuming the role of teacher will first ask a question that he or she thinks covers important information that has been read. The other members of the group answer that question and suggest others they may have thought of. The "teacher" then summarizes the information

read, points out anything that may have been unclear, leads the group in clarifying, and, finally, predicts the upcoming content.

To ensure a minimal level of competency with the four strategies, the students receive practice with each of them. For example, the students summarize their favorite movie or television show. They then identify main idea information in brief and simple sentences and graduate to more complex paragraphs that contain redundant and trivial information. Each strategy receives one day of introduction.

Application

After the students have been introduced to each of the strategies, the dialogue begins. For the initial days of instruction, the adult teacher is principally responsible for initiating and sustaining the dialogue. This provides the opportunity for the teacher to provide further instruction and to model the use of the strategies in reading for meaning. The adult teacher may wish to call upon more capable students who will serve as additional models, but it is important that every student participate at some level. For some students, this participation may be such that they are noting one fact that they acquired in their reading. This is a beginning, and over time the teacher, through modeling and instruction, can guide these students toward a more complete summary.

As students acquire more practice with the dialogue, the teacher consciously tries to impart responsibility for the dialogue to the students while he or she becomes a coach, providing the students with evaluative information regarding the job they are doing and prompting more and higher levels of participation.

Source: Annemarie Sullivan Palincsar, "Reciprocal Teaching." *Teaching Reading as Thinking*, ASCD.

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HOW TO GET STARTED WITH THE THINK-ALONG PROCESS: GETTING STUDENTS TO BE ACTIVE CONSTRUCTORS OF MEANING

Roger Farr
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WHAT IS A THINK ALONG?

A THINK ALONG *is a teaching strategy that makes the invisible thinking process of reading visible. It is an attempt on the part of the teacher to model the thinking process that any good reader engages in when reading.*

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1. The teacher reads to the students while the students follow along with their own copy of the story.
2. It is best not to prepare a story ahead of time. Read as you do the first time. Of course, you will have to exaggerate some of the strategies.
3. Enjoy the story!
4. Use strategies, but don't identify them.
5. Just think aloud so the students will be able to think along.

USING A THINK ALONG

- Ask the students what kind of things you did as you were reading. Make a list on the chalkboard.
- Use the list on the chalkboard to make a printed list the students can use the next time to check the things you were doing.
- Discuss the things that were checked by the students. Ask if you did some things more than once.
- Ask the students if they do those things when they read. Talk about whether the **Think-along** strategies make the story more interesting.
- Ask students if they'd like to read to the class and use the strategies that you used. Call on volunteers.
- Ask the students to listen for strategies. Talk about the strategies that were used.
- Have students try out reading strategies with each other as they read in small groups.
- Have students tape record their reading aloud as they use the **Think-along** strategies.
- Ask students to listen to their tape recordings to see how many strategies they are using.

Trends

Reading

ROGER FARR

Teaching Good Habits with Think-Alongs

In 1983 Beth Davey suggested an instructional process that she called *think-aloud* in which the teacher models the thinking strategies good readers use to construct meaning. Now often called *think-along*, the process has been adopted in a number of schools. In its recent reading textbook adoption, for example, the State of Virginia asked the reviewers to look for the process in the basals they were considering.

During the think-along process, the teacher reads a story, or an excerpt, aloud to students, who follow along in their copies. As the teacher reads, she *thinks-aloud* so the students can *think-along* with her, for instance, by:

- repeating or elaborating on details of how a scene or character looked,
- predicting what might happen next,
- admitting confusion over the meaning of a work or phrase,
- rereading portions to clarify meaning,
- verbalizing background knowledge that is being activated to help clarify meaning.

In brief, the teacher reads aloud and verbalizes the kind of things any good reader thinks about while trying to comprehend new material.

The Lettie Marshall Dent Elementary School in Mechanicsville, Maryland, has used the think-along approach for several years.[1] Teachers there, however, have expanded the process so that after students experience think-alongs with the teacher, they pair up and use think-alongs with each other, coaching each other after oral reading. Students also use checklists to record quickly and easily the think-along strategies demonstrated by the teacher and special bookmarks to remind them of strategies to use during silent reading.

Teachers at the school have collected data about the think-along method that indicate students' behaviors have changed in several important ways:

1. The students' view of the reader's role has shifted from that of passive receiver of knowledge to one of active participant in constructing knowledge.
2. As students discuss and expand on the texts they are reading—without the use of teacher or text questions—their verbal skills have increased, and they participate verbally in other classroom discussions with greater frequency and fluency.
3. As they monitor their comprehension through the think-along process, students are becoming more independent as readers.

As the teacher reads, she *thinks-aloud* so the students can *think-along* with her.

The Lettie Marshall Dent School has also collected pilot test score data to determine the effectiveness of the process. The results suggest that students who are taught the think-along process score higher on standardized reading tests than comparable students who are not taught to "think along." Teachers in this school and in others across the country are also applying the think-along process to math, science, and social studies.

Certainly think-along is not a new teaching strategy. Good teachers have always employed comparable techniques. Think-along does, however, bring together some important current thinking about teaching as modeling, the use of metacognition, the emphasis on reading strategies rather than skills, and the application of previous knowledge to construct new meaning. □

[1]For more information, contact Patricia Russavage, Principal, Lettie Marshall Dent Elementary School, Mechanicsville, MD 20659.

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Davey, B. (October 1983). "Think-Aloud—Modeling the Cognitive Process of Reading Comprehension." *Journal of Reading*, 44–47.

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Strategy Lessons

Definition

A strategy lesson is a plan for instruction that focuses on aspects of written language for which students need support. The lessons may grow out of reading experiences that students are not processing effectively, or the need for expanded reading experiences from which most students can benefit. Strategy lessons are to be used by individuals or groups who, through evaluation, indicate that they need the specific support emphasized in the lesson. The material for each strategy lesson is carefully constructed or selected to provide a *real, whole* language context while focusing on a selected reading strategy. Materials written or chosen especially for the strategy lessons make it possible for students to use their language competence to the fullest as they continuously develop reading proficiency.

Significance of Context

In written language, readers have available a semantic and syntactic as well as a graphophonic system. A reading *context* is never as ambiguous as are isolated units of language. Only in context is the reader able to make use of syntax and semantics in order to decide on the most appropriate of the possible meanings of a linguistic unit, and therefore approach the meaning of the author. There is no interaction between author and reader when isolated bits of information are being read.

Grid of Comprehending Strategies

Each strategy lesson in part two highlights one significant reading strategy -- predicting, confirming, or integrating -- as well as one of the three language systems -- graphophonic, syntactic, or semantic. The strategy lessons in the Grid of Comprehending Strategies have been selected because, it has been shown, that these are the most common aspects of reading that students need help in developing. The grid categorizes the strategy lessons. The horizontal columns list the strategy lessons most related to predicting, confirming, and integrating. Each lesson is placed in the vertical column that identifies its primary focus: the semantic, syntactic, or graphophonic language systems. However, during any lesson all strategies and language systems will occur because of their interrelationship in the reading process.

Strategy Lessons

In writing strategy lessons, keep in mind both how the reading process works and the criteria for writing good strategy lessons. The presentation of each reading-strategy lesson is organized as follows:

General Rationale
Strategy-Lesson Plan
1. Specific Rationale
2. Evaluation
3. Reading-Strategy Instruction
   a. Initiating
   b. Interacting
   c. Applying
   d. Expanding

From: *Goodman, Y.M., and Burke, C., Reading Strategies: Focus on Comprehension (pp. 31-35). New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980.*

GRID OF COMPREHENDING STRATEGIES

	Semantic	Syntactic	Graphophonic
Predicting	Content and Organization Focus on Meaning Fiction and Nonfiction Plot or Sequence of Events Pronouns Relational Words and Phrases Negatives Negatives and Meaning Negative Contractions	Grammatical Function Nouns as Names for People Nouns as Place Names Varieties of Grammatical Functions Indicators of Direct Speech Dialogue Carriers—Word Level Dialogue Carriers—Phrase Level Hard-to-Predict Grammatical Structures Hard-to-Predict Phrases and Clauses Identifying Hard-to-Predict Structures	Uncommon Spelling Patterns Eye Dialect Foreign-Language Words and Phrases Graphic Variations Print Variations Format Variations
Confirming	Rethink/Reread Developing Meaning through Context	Punctuation Repeated Substitutions	Initial, Medial, and Final Graphic Cues Spelling Patterns through Language Experience Meaning without Graphophonic Cues Synonym Substitutions
Integrating	Concepts Informational Material Story Material Characterization and Setting Relating of Characterization and Setting to Action Getting To Know the Time and Place Determining Who Is Telling the Story Exploring Plot and Theme Plot Story Schema Theme Generalizations Point of View Propaganda Humor		

[Goodman, Y. M., & Burke, C. (1980). Reading strategies: Focus on comprehension. NY: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.]

Example: Strategy Lesson 1

Semantic Predicting - Substituting Non-words for Unknown words

Rationale

When confronted with an unknown word, some readers over-rely on the graphophonic information and substitute a non-word which looks and sounds very much like the text word. They are content to do this even when it disrupts the meaning of what they are reading. This lesson is designed to assist students in minimizing the use of graphophonic cues and to confirm their predictions based on the context of the material.

Examples

This lesson will benefit students whose miscue analysis might look like the following:

1. The neighbor was perplexed. *prelexed
2. He speaks more often with nonsense than with sense. *nonsese *sese
3. Last night there was almost a gale. *gile

Procedure

Have the student read the following set of paragraphs silently. After reading each paragraph, the student is asked to supply the appropriate word for the nonsense word in the selection.

1. There are two kinds of boobaguts, the African boobagut and the Indian boobagut. The African boobagut is larger in every way. An African boobagut is about two feet taller than an Indian boobagut. It also weighs more. The African boobagut has huge ears and a longer trunk. Its tusks are larger too.

2. Many fairy tales tell about flugots. Flugots never really existed, but people long ago believed in them. Sailors brought back stories about seeing flugots in faraway lands. Some people said they could see fire coming from flugot's mouths. Other men told of killing flugots. But the stories weren't true. Flugot's never lived.

Follow-up

Have the student read the story, "People Flip for Wilson," which contains underlined nonsense words. During independent silent reading, the student should apply the synonym substitution strategy. A copy of the story in which blanks are substituted for the non-words can be used as a second follow-up activity.

People Flip for Wilson by John Reddy

A hot summer nus beat down on the gleaming rac as it rolled up to the church. It was Sunday. The black nma at the wheel had stopped to hear the people inside singing. Black kids were gnignis, in the dust in the yard. They came up to tbe gib car and stared at the driver. Then eno of them spoke up.
"He looks a lot like Flip Wilson."
"He is Flip Wilson," the black man said.
"If your Flip Wilson," asked one of the orher kids, "what are yaw doing out here?"

"Well, I was just diruended by, and God said for me to stop and see you." Flip looked down at the kids and showed the flashing grin they had seen on YB.

What was Flip Wilson, a big YB star doing here? He wasreder to see the place he had seen as he was growing up.

Wilson had hard times when he was a ghener. His mother had 24 kids, she ran out on them when Flip was five. So all the kids were sent to sterring homes.

the people who got Flip and one of the brothers were not hummer. They had a hosty time getting food for the kids. They were people who said it was a sin to read comic books. So Flip made his own fun. So he started to smell jokes to his brother. He came to like to make lopes laugh.

Expanding

Ask the student to think of some nonsense words. Then instruct him or her to write a short paragraph about something he or she enjoys doing. The paragraph should first be written using real words and then using some of the nonsense words. The story can then be read to other students who will be asked to predict the words the writer intended.

Example: Strategy Lesson 2

Personalized Strategy Lesson For Renee

Syntactic-Confirming - Habitual Association-Grammatical

Rationale

Grammatical Habitual Associations disrupt the process of gaining meaning. Readers making limited use of effective reading strategies often confuse common words or phrases such as for with from, then with when, and brought with bought. These word pairs often become habitually associated because the reader is relying on the graphic/sound or the grammatical cueing systems to the exclusion of meaning.

This is the case with Renee. While reading her RMI selection, she consistently confused words such as "said" with "saw" and "mice" with "mouse". In many instances these associations were a major cause of meaning loss.

Evaluation

Readers with habitual associations that disrupt meaning need to have a carefully written story related to their background and experience and in which the habitually associated words are used only when the grammar and the meaning are carefully controlled. Although this strategy was especially designed for Renee, a similar format would benefit other readers with such grammatical habitual associations.

Initiating

Renee should be shown a series of sentences in which "said" and "saw" are used alternately or separately. Ex: 1. Mother said that she saw me playing. 2. My sister said that she saw my doll in the tree. 3. The teacher said that I could play ball. 4. The boy said that he had two sisters.

Interacting

Questions for discussion:

1. What did each person see?
2. What did each person say?

Or, if sentences are used in which "saw" and "said" do not appear together, she may be asked in which did somebody "see something" or "say something".

Applying

Materials: copy of a story written especially for Renee's particular association.

Tell Renee that she will be reading a story about a girl and her big sister. The purpose of her reading will be to discover what the girls "said" as opposed to what they "saw".

Expanding

Language Experience: Have Renee make up her own sentences using said and saw together or separately. Tape and transcribe them for her use at a later date.

Art: Have Renee illustrate and subtitle what she saw at the zoo, park, circus, etc.

Listening Skills: Renee could be given a copy of a story using said or saw (or both). She could underline what the character said or saw while listening to a more proficient reader's oral reading.

Example: Strategy Lesson 3

Strategy Lesson for Theme

Initiation

Take four Aesop fables and make copies for each student. The students are to read each fable and match it to the correct theme or message. The four themes could be on a separate sheet that would be given to the students after they have read the fables.

Interaction

Have a class discussion concerning the lessons or morals read about in the four fables: Ask the questions: "Has this type of situation ever happened to you? What character do you identify with? Do you know of other books or stories that have a message? What was the author's message?"

Application

Tell the students to pick a fable and using the theme, rewrite the fable using human characters.

Follow-up

1. Read and discuss stories or books with obvious themes.
   EXAMPLES: The Little Red Hen
   Sylvester and the Magic Pebble
   The Man and the Donkey
   The Something
   Daniel and the Lion
   Pinochio
   The Emperor's New Clothes

2. List themes on separate sheets around the room and the children list any books they have read under appropriate headings.
   EXAMPLES: "Don't count your chickens before they are hatched."
   "Many things are easier said than done."
   "The pen is mightier than the sword."
   "In time of trouble one learns who one's friends are."

The Ant and the Dove

A thirsty Ant went to the river to drink. To reach the river he had to climb down the steep bank on a blade of grass. Halfway down he slipped and fell into the swirling waters.

A Dove, perched in a nearby tree, saw the Ant's desperate plight. Quickly she plucked a leaf from the tree and dropped it into the river, close to the Ant. The Ant was able to climb up on the leaf and float safely to shore.

As soon as he was on dry land, the Ant saw a hunter of birds hiding behind a tree with a net in his hand. Seeing that the Dove was in danger, he crawled up to the hunter and bit him on his heal. The startled hunter dropped his net, and the Dove flew off.

The Dove, perched safely in the tree, called down to the Ant. "Thank you, my little friend." "Not at all," said the Ant. "ONE GOOD TURN DESERVES ANOTHER."

Taken from Aesop's Fables as Retold by Ann McGovern and published by Scholastic Book Services

Expansion

As a follow-up on the development of questioning behaviors, the students are introduced to the Question-Answer Relationship (QAR). The QAR strategy helps students clarify the different sources of information available to answer questions during the ReQuest Procedure. The teacher helps the student decide if the questions they asked can be answered from information IN-THE-BOOK or IN-MY-HEAD.

The IN-THE-BOOK category can be expanded to include:

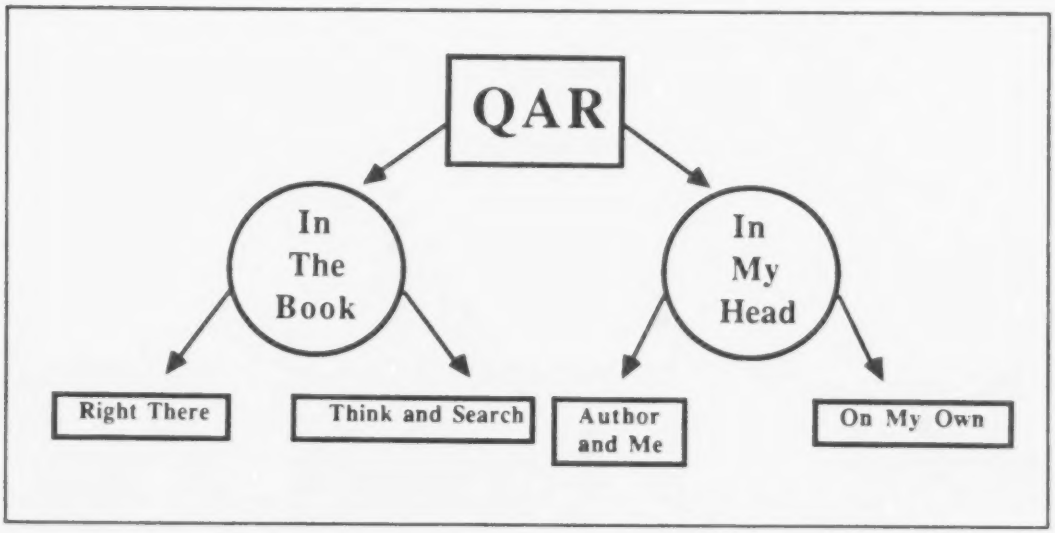
1. answers that are stated in the text (RIGHT THERE).

2. answers that require the reader to put together material from the text (THINK AND SEARCH).

The IN-MY-HEAD category can include answers that require:

1. students to think about what they already know and how that information fits in with the information the author provides in the text (AUTHOR AND ME).

2. questions that can be answered without reading the text (ON MY OWN).



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REQUEST
Reciprocal Questioning

Background Information

The ReQuest Procedure was developed by Anthony Manzo (1969) to guide students through as many sentences as necessary to enable the student to comprehend the rest of the passage successfully. The ReQuest Procedure is designed to improve the student's reading comprehension by providing an active learning situation for the development of questioning behaviors. The teacher encourages the student to ask questions about the text material and to set his/her own purposes for reading. The ReQuest Procedure was originally devised as a remedial procedure involving an individual student and the teacher, but it can also be utilized with pairs, teams, and/or small groups.

The procedure is indirectly diagnostic; by noting the kinds of questions the student asks for each kind of text structure, the teacher can determine whether the student is comprehending. Through teacher modeling of good questioning behavior, the student gains insight into how good readers ask themselves questions as they are reading. In addition, the procedure encourages the exchange of content information and the exchange of ideas.

Initiation

The ReQuest Procedure consists of the following steps:

1. Both the student and the teacher silently read a common selection from the text. The selection can be read one sentence at a time or a paragraph at a time.

2. After they have both read the passage, the student asks as many questions as possible. The teacher answers the questions clearly and completely.

3. Then it is the teacher's turn to ask the questions about the same sentence or paragraph, and the student answers as fully as possible. By forming questions which call upon the student's grasp of text structures, the teacher models good questioning strategies.

4. When the student has finished answering, teacher and student read the next sentence or paragraph and proceed as before.

5. When the student has processed enough information to make predictions about the rest of the selection, the exchange of questions stops. The teacher then asks directed reading type questions: "What do you think the rest of the assignment is about?" "Why do you think so?" The student reads the rest of the assignment.

6. The teacher facilitates follow-up discussion of the material.

Interaction

The teacher chooses a story or passage to be read by the student and the teacher; content area texts and prose materials work equally well. Both the student and the teacher need copies of the reading materials. This procedure can be done with an individual student and the teacher or with pairs, teams, and/or small groups. Students are told they will read a story and take turns asking each other questions over a specified section to improve their understanding of what they read.

Application

Students practice this technique on both short and long reading passages to develop self-monitoring skills. Students should be encouraged to ask questions that will stimulate interpretive or applied levels of thinking such as questions on the main idea of the passage.

Story Structure

The Story Parts

One way to describe the manner in which a typical story is structured is by a story grammar, which defines the elements in a story and their order. We taught the children about story parts as represented in Mandler and Johnson's grammar (1977). The Figure shows a well formed story and its parts. The Setting introduces the most important character(s) and describes the place and time in which the action takes place. It gives the who (Mrs. Cow), where (Mr. Brown's barnyard), and the when (one day).

The parts of a well formed story (Figure)

Setting	One day Mrs. Cow was walking around the barnyard on Mr. Brown's farm.
Beginning	All of a sudden, she spied Mr. Brown's garden just outside the barnyard fence. The garden was full of ripe cabbages, tender green beans, juicy melons, and squash.
Simple reaction	Mrs. Cow said to herself, "My, those vegetables and fruits are very tempting. And I am soooo hungry."
Goal	Mrs. Cow decided to get into the garden somehow.
Attempt	So she trotted all the way back across the barnyard, until she was as far away from the garden fence as she could get. Then she lowered her head and ran as fast as she could right at the fence. Wham! She hit the fence hard.
Outcome	The fence was old and it broke into 100 pieces. Mrs. Cow smiled in satisfaction and stepped daintily over the shattered fence into the garden.
Ending	Mr. Brown, of course, was not very pleased and tied Mrs. Cow up in the barn for 3 days as a punishment. But Mrs. Cow was sure that it had been worth it.

* **The Beginning** is some event that starts the action rolling. It often sets up a problem for the main character. In our story, not much is going on with Mrs. Cow until she happens to spot the flourishing garden; after that event, the story gets going.

* **The Simple Reaction** is made up of the protagonist's thoughts about, or emotional response to, the Beginning. Mrs. Cow thinks about the tempting garden and how she is hungry. Often the Simple Reaction is not explicitly stated, but can easily be inferred by the reader.

* **The Goal** tells what the main character decided to or wanted to do about the problem that arose in the Beginning. Mrs. Cow decided to get into the garden and forage. In a more altruistic moment, she might have formed a different Goal, that of resisting temptation. One Beginning might have the potential for spawning different Goals, but the Goal selected by the author must be related to the Beginning. As with the Simple Reaction, the Goal often has to be inferred by the reader.

* **The Attempt** describes how the protagonist tried to reach the Goal. Mrs. Cow might have tried a different method for reaching her Goal. For example, she might have tried to jump over the fence or find an open gate or stretch her neck over the fence to get some of the closer crops. Any of these activities would be Attempts - efforts to reach her Goal.

* **The Outcome** tells if the Attempt was success or not. In our story, Mrs. Cow's Attempt did result in her reaching her Goal. But the Outcome could alternatively have been unsuccessful, with Mrs. Cow laid out unconscious in the barnyard after meeting the fence head-on.

* **The Ending** wraps up the story. It tells of some long range consequences of the action.

The Lessons

* **Story production activities** - In one version of the story production activity, the children were given a Setting and then dictated a group story, one element at a time, while the instructor wrote the story on a chart. For individual work, the children were given a template on which to write their own stories. A setting was written across the top of the template, followed by the labels for the different story parts written down the left hand margin. After each child wrote his or her story based on the same Setting, they were all encouraged to share their stories.

Pairs of children collaborated on writing a story, separating each story part on the page. Each pair then cut up their story into constituents and mixed the parts up. Other pairs reassembled the stories in the correct order.

As a group, the children played "Give the Next Part." In this game, a Setting was given. The children were asked to tell which part should come next (Beginning) and why. Then two different Beginnings were elicited from the group. Each child told why his or her Beginning met the criteria for a Beginning. Then one Beginning was selected, and the children were asked to tell what part should come next, offer two choices, justify these, and so on, until a complete story had been produced by the group.

In Cumulative Tales, another story production activity, each child wrote his or her own Setting for a story. Before passing this Setting on to another writer, the child was asked to check and be sure that he had included all the appropriate information for a Setting, but only that information (the first author could not do anything to set up a problem or get the action rolling). When each child had received and read the Setting written by another child, the children wrote a story Beginning that fit in with that Setting. They were asked to check and be sure that their Beginning set up a problem, but they were not to have the main character react to their problem or to formulate a Goal. Then these Settings plus Beginnings were passed and read, and a Simple Reaction and Goal added, and so on, until complete stories had been written.

After each part was written, and before the story was passed on, the children were asked to check that their added information was limited only to the story part they were to supply that time. When the stories were finished, they were returned to the Setting authors, who were usually very surprised at how the story they began was developing. The children enjoyed having the stories then read aloud.

* **Sequencing activities** - In sequencing activities, the children placed story parts in the appropriate order, as predicted by the story grammar. Individual sentences were not used; rather, the children received all of the sentences for a story element as one chunk. Sequencing was usually done physically. That is, the children did not simply copy the parts into the correct order or read them in the appropriate sequence; they moved pieces of paper around or lined up in front of the classroom, with each group member holding one story part. Justifications were always elicited from the order chosen. Often the instructor would move the children into a different order and ask them to tell why that order would not be permissible.

* **Macrocloze activities** - In macrocloze activities (Whaley, 1981a and 1981b) an entire story part was deleted from the children's copies. For example, in the Mrs. Cow story, all the information about the Attempt would be missing and a large blank space would be left. The children read the entire story, identified which story part was missing, and then individually supplied the information for the missing part.

The children's answers were compared and judged according to two criteria: Did the child supply the right kind of information (e.g., Attempt, if an Attempt was missing) and did the information supplied fit the entire story, including information given after the missing part. It was not necessary that a child's supplied part matched the content of the original, but only that it met these two criteria.

* **Group Inquiry Lessons** - For a Group Inquiry Lesson (modified from Bischofshausen, 1980) the class was divided into three groups. Each group got a different incomplete version of the same story. Through asking questions, each group tried to find out what information the other groups had on their versions and thus reconstruct the entire story. Group 1 was given the Setting, Beginning, Simple Reaction, and Goal. Group 2 got the Attempt and Outcome. Group 3 received only the Ending. The class was told that Group 1 had the first part of the story, Group 2 the middle, and Group 3 the last.

The children were told that they would be asking questions of the other two groups so that when their questions were answered, their group would be able to write the original story completely. Each group began by reading their own abbreviated version silently. The group then decided on just 5 questions that they could ask the other groups and which group each question should be directed toward. Now, one could ask a question about a story part itself, such as "What was the Beginning?" For example, Group 1 (which had the Setting through Goal) might have asked Group 2 "What did Mrs. Cow do to get in the garden?" Group 3, working only from the Ending, might have decided to ask Group 2 "What had been worth it?" Each group tried to get information without revealing too much of their own information.

Group 2 asked its 5 questions first. After Group 2 was done, the children had 3-5 minutes rethinking time, so that they could incorporate what they learned from Group 2's questions into their own plans. For example, if Group 2 had asked Group 1 "What did Mrs. Cow want from the garden?" and Group 1 answered "Ripe cabbages, tender green beans, juicy melons, and delicious squash," Group 3 now had information about the Beginning and the Goal and this might have altered their questioning strategies. After the rethinking period, either Group 1 or 3 asked questions, followed by another short pause for reflection before the last group asked its 5 questions.

When all 15 questions had been asked, each group wrote what they thought the complete story was. The three different versions were compared with each other, and with the original, and discussed.

* **Story Organization question activities** - A set of generic story organization questions was developed:

How did _____ feel?
What did_____want (or decide)?
What did_____do?
What did_____do next?
How did it turn out?
How did_____feel about this after it was all over?

These questions were used in a variety of ways. For group story productions, the children might have been given a Setting and a Beginning and then guided through the dictation of a story by being asked the Story Organization Questions. For individually produced stories, the children received a Setting and the list of questions to help them structure their compositions.

To help the children see how thinking about the parts of a story could help them remember what they had read or listened to, the children were asked to retell a story while referring to the chart of Story Organization Questions.

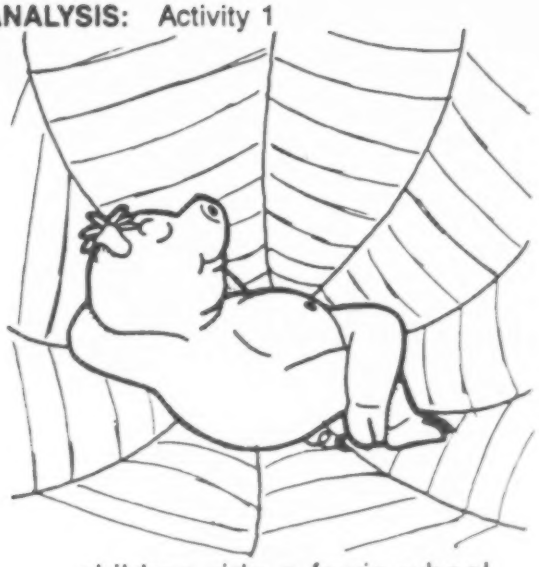
The children also practiced using their understanding of the parts of a story to help them answer questions about fairly long stories. For this activity, the children read a 300 to 400 word story in its entirety and identified its parts. Next, given a list of questions, they answered each question and identified which part of the story (Setting, Beginning, etc.) each answer came from. For example, for the Mrs. Cow story, a question might be "Did Mrs. Cow ever get into the garden?" The children would answer the question and then identify that question as tapping the Outcome of the story.

CONCLUSION

Instruction in story parts and their order can have a fairly quick and powerful effect on children's knowledge of story structure and on their ability to comprehend stories.

(From: Spiegel, D. L., and Fitzgerald, J. "Improving reading comprehension through instruction about story parts" in The Reading Teacher, March 1986).

ANALYSIS: Activity 1



What could happen?

Some things in this story could happen in real life. Some things could not happen in real life. Read this list. Write the things from the list that could happen in Column 1. Write the things that could not happen in Column 2.

children ride a ferris wheel

pig spins a web

spider makes an egg sac

animals talk "people" talk

spider spins a web

spider spells words

goose sits on eggs

girl takes care of baby pig

rat reads words

spider sings to a pig

Column 1 — Things that could happen

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Column 2 — Things that could not happen

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

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EVALUATION: Activity 2

Because . . .

In *Charlotte's Web,* you learned the word *runt.* A runt is the smallest animal in a litter of baby animals born at the same time. You also learned that farmers, like Mr. Arable, often kill the runts that are born on a farm.

You will work in groups of four. Think together and answer these questions:

1. Why do you think Mr. Arable said, "A weakling makes trouble," when he talked to Fern about the new pig? _____

2. Read this part from the story:
"But it's unfair," cried Fern. "The pig couldn't help being born small, could it? If I had been very small at birth, would you have killed me?"

Mr. Arable smiled. "Certainly not," he said, looking down at his daughter with love. "But this is different. A little girl is one thing, a little runty pig is another."

"I see no difference," replied Fern, still hanging onto the ax. "This is the most terrible case of injustice I ever heard of."

Now, think of one reason why Mr. Arable might be right. _____

Think of one reason why Fern may be right. _____

Do you agree with Fern or Mr. Arable? _____

Why? _____

3. Why do you think Mr. Arable finally let Fern keep Wilbur instead of killing him? _____

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ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills

ERIC Digest

Dialogue Journals

Teachers who want to involve every student, even the most reluctant, in a literacy practice which unites reading and writing and encourages thinking and reflection, may want to consider incorporating dialogue journals into their classroom practice. Dialogue journals use writing as a genuine means of communication between each student and the teacher, to get things done in the common life they share in the classroom.

What Is a Dialogue Journal?

A dialogue journal is a bound composition book in which each student carries on a private written conversation with the teacher for an extended period of time (school year, semester). Unlike much school-assigned writing, which is often only for purposes of evaluation, dialogue journals are *functional, interactive,* mostly about *self-generated topics,* and deeply embedded in the continuing life of the classroom. Both persons write to each other in an informal, direct style about topics of mutual interest, usually on a daily basis at elementary level, two or three times a week for older students. In a school year, even primary students can fill several composition books.

Dialogue journals serve as a bridge between natural spoken conversation, with its participants and turns, and the traditional classroom tasks of essay and report writing. They also allow students to develop more coherent self-expression and a personal "voice"—both essential aspects of writing which are often lost when basic composition skills are stressed.

Dialogue journals were developed over many years by a sixth-grade teacher, Leslie Reed, in Los Angeles, to meet several needs—to get to know her students better, to get feedback on lessons, to improve classroom discipline, and to involve each student in meaningful reading and writing. Extensive classroom observations and text analyses of dialogue journals have been conducted with both native and nonnative speakers of English (Staton 1980; Staton et al. 1987; Kreeft et al. 1985). They are now being used with first- through sixth-graders, with second language learners, with high school and college students in various content areas (Atwell 1984) and with special education populations (Baites et al. 1986).

Some brief excerpts from dialogue journals in Leslie Reed's class are helpful for understanding their conversational, interactive nature.

Gordon: *I did terrible on the math homework from last night. Math was totally terrible. I hate math. I really do hate it!*

Mrs. R.: *Come on! Give yourself a chance. You hate every new math idea and in a couple of days you're saying "I like this—it's easy!" You'll catch on—let me help!*

Gordon: *That is not true! I did not say that about fractions—did I?*

• • • • • •

Janinne: *I wish that I didn't win the Spelling Bee. I know I should be happy about winning but I feel worse than I ever did . . . I feel very much as if the whole world is against me. Even what I thought were my best of friends. The people I trusted now hate me. Why can't they understand?*

Mrs. R: *It is difficult to understand—and I understand and share your weird feelings! . . . It is most difficult to be a good loser! Somehow being a loser you feel better if you can criticize or "tear down" the winner. The act of destroying the winner makes a poor loser feel better.*

Although each entry is brief, from a few sentences to a page in length, the same topics tend to be discussed and elaborated on for several days, creating extended writing opportunities. Such writing works best when teachers understand the need for students to "own" their writing, allowing students to write about whatever concerns or topics they feel are important on a given day. Students ask questions, complain about lessons, describe what happened on the playground or at home, reflect on why things happen, express personal feelings—in other words, they use written language in all the purposeful ways they use their spoken language.

What Are Some of the Benefits to Students?

Dialogue journals create a one-to-one relationship between student and teacher in which both academic and personal concerns may be discussed. The journals represent a concrete application of Vygotsky's theory that learning of functional human activities occurs first through the learner's cooperative participation in accomplishing tasks with a more experienced partner. What the learner can do with assistance today can be done unaided in the future. By creating a dialogue setting, the teacher supports the student's emerging reading and writing competencies and the acquisition of more complex reasoning skills (Kreeft 1984, Staton 1984).

But dialogue journals are not a method of instruction in specific skills; they provide opportunities to use newly acquired abilities in writing and reading. As with any truly individualized practice, each student benefits in a different way. Research has shown some of the following benefits:

1. Opportunities to engage in reflection about experiences and to think together with an adult about choices, problems, and ideas (Staton 1984).
2. Opportunities to engage in a natural, purposeful way in different kinds of writing—narration, description and argumentation, even poetry (Kreeft et al. 1985; Staton et al. 1987), and to use all the functions of language.

3. Opportunities to read a personalized text—that is, the teacher's written responses—about topics the student has initiated. The teacher's writing may often be more advanced and complex than textbooks that students are assigned to read (Gambrell 1985; Staton 1986).

Teachers of younger children find the dialogues particularly helpful in early stages of literacy instruction. The interactive dialogue, with just a few sentences each day, makes use of the young child's developed competence in oral language, as shown in this dialogue between a child (who is not yet a "reader," according to standardized tests) and her teacher, Marley Casagrande of Fairfax County.

Kelly: *I like the little red hen and Dick and Jane. I have problems some times Well I have this problem it is I am not very god on my writing.*

Mrs. C.: *I think you are a good writer. Keep on trying. I like the Little Red Hen, too, Kelly. Keep on writing!*

Kelly: *Oh kay. Do you have a problem. if you do I will help you and what are you going to be for Halloween.*

Mrs. C.: *I am going to be a farmer. I will wear overalls and a straw hat. Everybody has problems, Kelly. Some problems are big and some are small. One of my small problems is I can't stop eating chocolate when I see it.*

Studies also show that the more reluctant and least proficient writers are motivated to write in dialogue journals, and that this motivation can transfer to other writing tasks (Hays and Bahruth 1985). Over time, student entries increase in length, become more fluent, and show greater competency in focusing on a topic and elaborating on it (Staton et al. 1986).

For the ESL learner, there is an added benefit in this daily, continuous conversation: the teacher's responses provide clear, comprehensible language for students to absorb subconsciously as a model for language acquisition (Kreeft et al. 1985). Teachers become competent at writing to an optimally challenging level for each student, varying their language to ensure comprehension (Kreeft et al. 1985).

Students have their own way of explaining the benefits of dialogue journals to themselves:

> The worksheets make you answer questions, but the dialogue journal makes *me* ask the questions, and then the teacher helps me think about possible answers. (Staton 1984)

What about the Time It Takes?

Incorporating dialogue journals into a teacher's daily schedule does take time, but that time is also useful for planning the next day's lessons, based in part on the information the dialogue journals provide. Teachers find that they enjoy responding in the journals and look forward to this time.

A second major benefit for teachers is that the dialogue journals seem to improve classroom management and discipline. The journals are a long-range technique for helping individual students learn how to manage their own actions. Teachers report that the individual dialogues help them reach students who are discipline problems or are often absent.

Dialogue, a newsletter on dialogue journals, is available from CLEAR (Center for Language Education and Research at the Center for Applied Linguistics), 1118 22nd Street NW, Washington, DC 20037. The list of several handbooks on the subject is now available (Baites et al. 1986).

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